

English Literature Series. No. 22.  
*General Editor* :—J. H. FOWLER, M.A.

SELECTIONS FROM  
COBBETT'S RURAL RIDES





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COBBETT INSTRUCTING HIS OFFICERS.

[From William Cobbett by E. I. Carlyle.

# Selections from Cobbett's Rural Rides

*Edited, with an Introduction, by*

Guy Boas

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED  
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON

1926

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## CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	ix
RURAL RIDES . . . . .	1
NOTES . . . . .	146
QUESTIONS . . . . .	151
BOOKS RECOMMENDED . . . . .	152



## INTRODUCTION

WILLIAM COBBETT

IN 1762 William Cobbett, grandson of a farm-labourer, and son of a farmer and inn-keeper, was appropriately born at the "Jolly Farmer," Farnham, Surrey.

His father, as a boy, had driven a plough for twopence a day, and had spent the proceeds on attending an evening school. Writing of his own early education, William recalled: "In the winter evenings my Father learnt us all to read and write, and gave us a pretty tolerable knowledge of arithmetic. Grammar he did not perfectly understand himself, and therefore his endeavours to learn us that necessarily failed." For this parental deficiency the son atoned in later years by writing his amusing *Grammar of the English Language*.

But book-learning was only an after-supper luxury. "I do not remember the time when I did not earn my living. My first occupation was driving the small birds from the turnip-seed, and the rooks from the pease. When I first trudged a-field, with my wooden bottle and my satchel swung over my shoulders, I was hardly able to climb the gates and stiles; and, at the close of the day, to reach home was a task of infinite difficulty. My next employment was weeding wheat, and leading a single horse at harrowing barley. Hoeing pease followed, and hence I arrived at the honour of joining the reapers in harvest, driving the team and holding plough."



At eleven years old, while clipping box-edgings in the garden of the Bishop of Winchester, he was fired by another gardener's description of the glories of Kew Gardens with a desire to see them for himself. Having trudged as far as Richmond, he found only threepence left in his pocket, which he devoted to purchasing Swift's *Tale of a Tub* in preference to supper. This work, which he read under a haystack, "though I could not understand some of it," produced "a sort of birth of intellect."

At the age of twenty he first saw the sea from the top of Portsdown. "But it was not the sea alone I saw; the grand fleet was riding at anchor at Spithead." This thrilling spectacle caused him to offer himself at once for service as a seaman, but he was refused. He returned disconsolately to the plough, "spoiled for a farmer."

The following year, dressed in his holiday clothes, he set out to meet "two or three lasses" whom he was to accompany to Guildford fair, when, as he crossed the London turnpike road, the stage coach came rattling towards him. For a freak "up I got, and was in London about nine o'clock in the evening."

For a time he obtained employment in a lawyer's office, from which he gladly escaped to enlist in a line regiment. While training at Chatham he devoted himself to the study of English grammar, and when he joined his regiment in Nova Scotia he instructed his adjutant in that subject. After eight years' honourable service, during which he proved himself a highly efficient non-commissioned officer, he returned with the regiment to England and took his discharge. He then endeavoured to bring certain officers to account on the charge of peculation: his accusations failed, and his efforts to secure an increase in soldiers' pay, expressed in his pamphlet *The Soldier's Friend*, ended in his having to seek safety in France, where he devoted himself to the study of French grammar.

From France he removed to Philadelphia, where, after teaching English to French refugees, he was drawn into

American politics, writing as a pamphleteer upon the Federal side.

He made such a name, that, when he returned to England in 1800, he was welcomed by the government party, who assisted him to start a daily paper. In 1802 he started *Cobbett's Weekly Political Register*, which he continued for the remaining thirty years of his life.

Two years after initiating the *Register*, Cobbett joined the popular party and became an ardent reformer. A violently outspoken article protesting against military flogging caused a government prosecution, and he was sentenced to two years' imprisonment and a fine of £1000.

Emerging from prison nearly ruined, Cobbett enormously increased the circulation of the *Register* among the working classes by reducing its price to twopence. Fearing a second imprisonment, he fled to farm in America in 1817, but returned within three years to continue his journalistic and agricultural activities at home.

About 1821 he set out on the Rural Rides, which in intention were as political as they were rural. The accounts of these tours were published in collected form in 1830.

So energetically had Cobbett advocated reform, that he was prosecuted by the government for sedition. Conducting his own defence, he triumphantly secured an acquittal, and decided to stand for Parliament. Having twice been at the bottom of the poll, he was at length elected for Oldham. Though his energy was unabated, his years were advanced, and time was only left him in which to attack Pitt, and enter upon a series of speeches upon the Malt Tax, before, in 1835, he died, at Normandy Farm, near Guildford, more peacefully than he had lived.

There is no reason why journalism should not be literature, except that it has to be produced so often and in such quantities. Men who are capable of "literature" therefore shun it, or at most shoot occasional arrows, like Lamb, and the task devolves mostly upon those who are no more than com-



petent writers. Occasionally, however, comes a man with sufficient personality and energy to fill a news-sheet with himself as well as with news, and with opinions whose interest lasts longer than a day's edition.

Such a man—like Addison—was William Cobbett. All his life he poured out his views pell-mell into journals and registers and magazines, and because Nature had endowed him with a gift of style, an instinct for the simple, neat, inevitable word, an appetite for beauty, and a vivacity born of hating and being happy, the result was continually literature. The fact that Cobbett was never at pains to write well was probably the secret of his art. "Never stop to make choice of words," he wrote to a nephew; "put down your thoughts in words just as they come. Follow the order which your thought will point out; and it will push you on to get it upon the paper as quickly and as clearly as possible."

Cobbett's own thoughts were pushed so quickly on to paper that they were almost as quickly changed: though he never altered a word, he rarely failed to alter an opinion. For ten years as "Peter Porcupine" he rages rabidly as a Tory, is suddenly converted not so much to admiration for Liberalism as to detestation of Pitt, and spends the last thirty years of his life a pugnacious vociferous Radical, railing against Conservative Ministers and landlords, reactionary clerics, Methodist preachers, and judges.

These political antipathies are all apparent in the *Rural Rides*, but at the same time they are coupled in the *Rides* more than in any other of Cobbett's works with his non-polemical virtues. Enthusiasm for English scenery, English veal, English freedom, for the simple healthy charm of English rural life and manners, acts as an antiseptic to the author's rage, and gives to the *Rides* something of the detached charm of a novel.

The book grew from a series of letters contributed to the *Political Register*. The rider jotted down notes at the end of each day's journey, and the result is so fresh that one can

almost hear his voice speaking after supper in the roadside inn, and recounting the day's impressions. The voice is never without authority. As has been said of a contemporary demagogue, Cobbett spoke so long as though he were a person of political importance that he at last became one, and when his subject is peas or pigs the authority of all the farmers in England booms through his harangues.

"The reason why so few good books are written," said Bagehot, "is that so few people that can write know anything." In the *Rural Rides* Cobbett wrote a good book, not because he had any fine literary aspirations, but simply because he was one of the few writers who know something. He knew what he liked: beautiful villages, prosperous markets, healthy labourers, low taxes. He knew what he did not like: industrialism, feudal oppression, Pitt, the "Wen." Added to which, he knew his trade, which was agriculture, and in talking about that trade he achieved what so many professional men of letters "agonize to do and fail in doing," he produced a lasting literary achievement.

G. B.



# RURAL RIDES

## JOURNAL

FROM LONDON, THROUGH NEWBURY, TO BERGH-  
CLERE, HURSTBOURN TARRANT, MARLBOROUGH,  
AND CIRENCESTER, TO GLOUCESTER.

BERGHCLERE, NEAR NEWBURY, HANTS,  
*October 30, 1821, Tuesday (Evening).*

FOG that you might cut with a knife all the way from London to Newbury. This fog does not *wet* things. It is rather a *smoke* than a fog. There are no two things in *this world*; and, were it not for fear of *Six-Acts* (the “wholesome restraint” of which I continually feel) I might be tempted to carry my comparison further; but, certainly, there are no two things in *this world* so dissimilar as an English and a Long Island autumn.—These fogs are certainly the *white clouds* that we sometimes see aloft. I was once upon the Hampshire Hills, going from Soberton Down to Petersfield, where the hills are high and steep, not very wide at their base, very irregular in their form and direction, and have, of course, deep and narrow valleys winding about between them. In one place that I had to pass, two of these valleys were cut asunder by a piece of hill that went across them and formed a sort of bridge from one long hill to another. A little before I came to this sort of bridge I saw a smoke



flying across it ; and, not knowing the way by experience, I said to the person who was with me, “ there is the turn-pike road (which we were expecting to come to) ; for, don’t you see the dust ? ” The day was very fine, the sun clear, and the weather dry. When we came to the pass, however, we found ourselves, not in dust, but in a fog. After getting over the pass, we looked down into the valleys, and there we saw the fog going along the valleys to the north, in detached parcels, that is to say, in clouds, and, as they came to the pass, they rose, went over it, then descended again, keeping constantly along just above the ground. And, to-day, the fog came by *spells*. It was sometimes thinner than at other times ; and these changes were very sudden too. So that I am convinced that these fogs are *dry clouds*, such as those that I saw on the Hampshire-Downs. Those did not *wet* me at all ; nor do these fogs wet anything ; and I do not think that they are by any means injurious to health.—It is the fogs that rise out of swamps, and other places, full of putrid vegetable matter, that kill people. These are the fogs that sweep off the new settlers in the American Woods. I remember a valley in Pennsylvania, in a part called *Wysihicken*. In looking from a hill, over this valley, early in the morning, in November, it presented one of the most beautiful sights that my eyes ever beheld. It was a sea bordered with beautifully formed trees of endless variety of colours. As the hills formed the out-sides of the sea, some of the trees showed only their tops ; and, every now-and-then, a lofty tree growing in the sea itself, raised its head above the apparent waters. Except the setting-sun sending his horizontal beams through all the variety of reds and yellows of the branches of the

trees in Long Island, and giving, at the same time, a sort of silver cast to the verdure beneath them, I have never seen anything so beautiful as the foggy valley of the Wysihicken. But, I was told, that it was very fatal to the people; and that whole families were frequently swept off by the "*fall-fever*."—Thus the *smell* has a great deal to do with health. There can be no doubt that butchers and their wives fatten upon the smell of meat. And this accounts for the precept of my grandmother, who used to tell me to *bite my bread and to smell my cheese*; talk much more wise than that of certain *old grannies*, who go about England crying up "*the blessings*" of paper-money, taxes, and national debts.

The fog prevented me from seeing much of the fields as I came along yesterday; but the fields of swedish turnips that I did see were good; pretty good; though not clean and neat like those in Norfolk. The farmers here, as everywhere else, complain most bitterly; but they hang on, like sailors to the masts or hull of a wreck. They read, you will observe, nothing but the country newspapers; they, of course, know nothing of the *cause* of their "*bad times*." They hope "*the times will mend*." If they quit business, they must sell their stock; and, having thought this worth so much money, they cannot endure the thought of selling for a third of the sum. Thus they hang on; thus the landlords will first turn the farmers' pockets inside out; and then their turn comes. To finish the present farmers will not take long. There has been stout fight going on all this morning (it is now 9 o'clock) between the *sun* and the *fog*. I have backed the former, and he appears to have gained the day; for he is now shining most delightfully.



Came through a place called “ a park ” belonging to a Mr. Montague, who is now *abroad* ; for the purpose, I suppose, of generously assisting to compensate the French people for what they lost by the entrance of the Holy Alliance Armies into their country. Of all the ridiculous things I ever saw in my life this place is the most ridiculous. The house looks like a sort of church, in somewhat of a gothic style of building, with *crosses* on the tops of different parts of the pile. There is a sort of swamp, at the foot of a wood, at no great distance from the front of the house. This swamp has been dug out in the middle to show the water to the eye ; so that there is a sort of river, or chain of diminutive lakes, going down a little valley, about 500 yards long, the water proceeding from the *soak* of the higher ground on both sides. By the sides of these lakes there are little flower gardens, laid out in the Dutch manner ; that is to say, cut out into all manner of superficial geometrical figures. Here is the *grand en petit*, or mock magnificence, more complete than I ever beheld it before. Here is a *fountain*, the basin of which is not four feet over, and the water spout not exceeding the pour from a tea-pot. Here is a *bridge* over a *river* of which a child four years old would clear the banks at a jump. I could not have trusted myself on the bridge for fear of the consequences to Mr. Montague ; but I very conveniently stepped over the river, in imitation of the *Colossus*. In another part there was a *lion's mouth* spouting out water into the lake, which was so much like the vomiting of a dog, that I could almost have pitied the poor Lion. In short, such fooleries I never before beheld ; but what I disliked most was the apparent impiety of a part of these works of refined taste.

I did not like the crosses on the dwelling house ; but, in one of the gravel walks, we had to pass under a gothic arch, with a cross on the top of it, and in the point of the arch a niche for a saint or a virgin, the figure being gone through the lapse of centuries, and the pedestal only remaining as we so frequently see on the outsides of Cathedrals and of old churches and chapels. But the good of it was, this gothic arch, disfigured by the hand of old Father Time, was composed of Scotch fir wood, as rotten as a pear ; nailed together in such a way as to make the thing appear, from a distance, like the remnant of a ruin ! I wonder how long this sickly, this childish, taste is to remain ? I do not know who this gentleman is. I suppose he is some honest person from the 'Change or its neighbourhood ; and that these *gothic arches* are to denote the *antiquity of his origin* ! Not a bad plan ; and, indeed, it is one that I once took the liberty to recommend to those Fundlords who retire to be country-'squires. But I never recommended the *Crucifixes* ! To be sure the Roman Catholic religion may, in England, be considered as a *gentleman's religion*, it being the most *ancient* in the country ; and, therefore, it is fortunate for a Fundlord when he happens (if he ever do happen) to be of that faith.

This gentleman may, for anything that I know, be a *Catholic* ; in which case I applaud his piety and pity his taste. At the end of this scene of mock grandeur and mock antiquity I found something more rational ; namely, some hare hounds, and, in half-an-hour after, we found, and I had the first hare-hunt that I had had since I wore a smock-frock ! We killed our hare after good sport, and got to Berghclere in the evening to a nice farmhouse in a



dell, sheltered from every wind, and with plenty of good living ; though with no gothic arches made of Scotch-fir !

October 31. *Wednesday.*

A fine day. Too many hares here ; but, our hunting was not bad ; or, at least, it was a great treat to me, who used, when a boy, to have my legs and thighs so often filled with thorns in running after the hounds, anticipating with pretty great certainty, a “ *waling* ” of the back at night. We had grey-hounds a part of the day ; but the ground on the hills is so *flinty*, that I do not like the country for coursing. The dogs’ legs are presently cut to pieces.

Nov. 1. *Thursday.*

Mr. Budd has swedish turnips, mangel-wurzel, and cabbages of various kinds, transplanted. All are very fine indeed. It is impossible to make more satisfactory experiments in *transplanting* than have been made here. But this is not a proper place to give a particular account of them. I went to see the best cultivated parts round Newbury ; but I saw no spot with half the “ *feed* ” that I see here, upon a spot of similar extent.

HURSTBOURN TARRANT, HANTS,

Nov. 2. *Friday.*

This place is commonly called *Uphusband*, which is, I think, as decent a corruption of names as one would wish to meet with. However, Uphusband the people will have it, and Uphusband it shall be for me. I came from Berghclere this morning, and through the park of Lord Caernarvon, at Highclere. It is a fine season to look at

woods. The oaks are still covered, the beeches in their best dress, the elms yet pretty green, and the beautiful ashes only beginning to turn off. This is, according to my fancy, the prettiest park that I have ever seen. A great variety of hill and dell. A good deal of water, and this, in one part, only wants the *colours* of American trees to make it look like a "*creek*;" for the water runs along at the foot of a steepish hill, thickly covered with trees, and the branches of the lowermost trees hang down into the water and hide the bank completely. I like this place better than *Fonthill*, *Blenheim*, *Stowe*, or any other gentleman's grounds that I have seen. The *house* I did not care about, though it appears to be large enough to hold half a village. The trees are very good, and the woods would be handsomer if the larches and firs were *burnt*, for which only they are fit. The great beauty of the place is, the *lofty downs*, as steep, in some places, as the roof of a house, which form a sort of boundary, in the form of a part of a crescent, to about a third part of the park, and then slope off and get more distant, for about half another third part. A part of these downs is covered with trees, chiefly beech, the colour of which, at this season, forms a most beautiful contrast with that of the down itself, which is so green and so smooth! From the vale in the park, along which we rode, we looked apparently almost perpendicularly up at the downs, where the trees have extended themselves by seed more in some places than others, and thereby formed numerous salient parts of various forms, and, of course, as many and as variously formed glades. These, which are always so beautiful in forests and parks, are peculiarly beautiful in this lofty situation and with verdure so smooth as that



of these chalky downs. Our horses beat up a score or two of hares as we crossed the park ; and, though we met with no *gothic arches* made of Scotch-fir, we saw something a great deal better ; namely, about forty cows, the most beautiful that I ever saw, as to colour at least. They appear to be of the Galway-breed. They are called, in this country, *Lord Caernarvon's breed*. They have no horns, and their colour is a ground of white with black or red spots, these spots being from the size of a plate to that of a crown-piece ; and some of them have no small spots. These cattle were lying down together in the space of about an acre of ground : they were in excellent condition, and so fine a sight of the kind I never saw. Upon leaving the park, and coming over the hills to this pretty vale of Uphusband, I could not help calculating how long it might be before some Jew would begin to fix his eye upon Highclere, and talk of putting out the present owner, who, though a *Whig*, is one of the best of that set of politicians, and who acted a manly part in the case of our deeply injured and deeply lamented queen. Perhaps his lordship thinks that there is no fear of the Jews as to *him*. But does he think that his tenants can sell fat hogs at 7s. 6d. a score, and pay him more than a third of the rent that they have paid him while the debt was contracting ? I know that such a man does not lose his estate at once ; but, without rents, what is the estate ? And that the Jews will receive the far greater of his part rents is certain, unless the interest of the debt be reduced. Lord Caernarvon told a man, in 1820, that *he did not like my politics*. But what did he mean by *my politics* ? I have no politics but such as he *ought* to like. I want to do away with that infernal *system*, which, after having

beggared and pauperised the labouring classes, has now, according to the report, made by the ministers themselves to the House of Commons, plunged the owners of the land themselves into a state of distress, for which those ministers themselves can hold out no remedy ! To be sure I labour most assiduously to destroy a system of distress and misery ; but is that any reason why a *lord* should dislike my politics ? However, dislike, or like them, to them, to those very politics, the lords themselves *must come at last*. And that I should exult in this thought, and take little pains to disguise my exultation, can surprise nobody who reflects on what has passed within these last twelve years. If the landlords be well ; if things be going right with them ; if they have fair prospects of happy days ; then what need they care about me and *my politics* ; but if they find themselves in “ *distress*,” and do not know how to get out of it ; and if they have been plunged into this distress by those who “ dislike my politics ; ” is there not *some reason* for men of sense to hesitate a little before they *condemn* those politics ? If no great change be wanted ; if things could remain even ; then men may, with some show of reason, say that I am disturbing that which ought to be let alone. But if things cannot remain as they are ; if there must be a *great change* ; is it not folly, and, indeed, is it not a species of idiotic perverseness, for men to set their faces without rhyme or reason, against what is said as to this change by *me*, who have, for nearly twenty years, been warning the country of its danger, and foretelling that which has now come to pass and is coming to pass ? However, I make no complaint on this score. People disliking my politics “ neither picks my pocket nor breaks

as for as that point is



my leg," as Jefferson said by the writings of the Atheists. If they be pleased in disliking my politics, I am pleased in liking them ; and so we are both enjoying ourselves. If the country want no assistance from me, I am quite sure that I want none from it.

Nov. 3. *Saturday.*

Fat hogs have lately sold, in this village, at 7s. 6d. a score (but would hardly bring that now), that is to say, at 4½d. a pound. The hog is weighed whole, when killed and dressed. The head and feet are included ; but, so is the lard. Hogs fattened on pease or barley-meal may be called the very best meat that England contains. At Salisbury (only about 20 miles off) fat hogs sell for 5s. to 4s. 6d. a score. But, then, observe, these are *dairy hogs*, which are not nearly so good in quality as the corn-fed hogs. But I shall probably hear more about these prices as I get further towards the West. Some wheat has been sold at Newbury-market for £6 a load (40 bushels) ; that is at 3s. a bushel. A considerable part of the crop is wholly unfit for bread flour, and is not equal in value to good barley. In not a few instances the wheat has been carried into the gate, or yard, and thrown down to be made dung of. So that, if we were to take the average, it would not exceed, I am convinced, 5s. a bushel in this part of the country ; and the average of all England would not, perhaps, exceed 4s. or 3s. 6d. a bushel. However, Lord Liverpool has got a *bad harvest* at last ! That *remedy* has been applied ! Somebody sent me some time ago, that stupid newspaper, called the *Morning Herald*, in which its readers were reminded of my "*false prophecies*," I having (as this paper said) foretold that

wheat would be at *two shillings a bushel before Christmas*. These gentlemen of the “*respectable part of the press*” do not mind lying a little upon a pinch. [See Walter’s *Times* of Tuesday last, for the following: “*Mr. Cobbett has thrown open the front of his house at Kensington, where he proposes to sell meat at a reduced price.*”] What I said was this: that, if the crop were good and the harvest fine, and gold continued to be paid at the Bank, we should see wheat at four, not two, shillings a bushel before Christmas. Now, the crop was, in many parts, very much blighted, and the harvest was very bad indeed; and yet the average of England, including that which is destroyed, or not brought to market at all, will not exceed 4s. a bushel. A farmer told me, the other day, that he got *so little* offered for some of his wheat, that he was resolved not to take any more of it to market; but to give it to hogs. Therefore, in speaking of the price of wheat, you are to take in the unsold as well as the sold; that which fetches nothing as well as that which is sold at high price.—I see, in the Irish papers, which have overtaken me on my way, that the system is working the Agriculturasses in “the sister-kingdom” too! The following paragraph will show that the *remedy* of a *bad harvest* has not done our dear sister much good. “A very numerous meeting of the Kildare Farming Society met at Naas on the 24th inst., the Duke of Leinster in the chair; Robert de la Touche, Esq., M.P., vice-president. Nothing can more strongly prove the **BADNESS OF THE TIMES**, and very *unfortunate state of the country*, than the necessity in which the Society finds itself of *discontinuing its premiums, from its present want of funds*. The best members of the farming classes have



got so much in arrear in their subscriptions that they have declined to appear or to dine with their neighbours, and general depression damps the spirit of the most industrious and *hitherto prosperous* cultivators." You are mistaken, Pat ; it is not the *times* any more than it is the *stars*. Bobadil, you know, imputed his beating to the *planets* : " planet-stricken, by the foot of Pharaoh ! " — " No, Captain," says Welldon, " indeed it was a *stick*." It is not the *times*, dear Patrick : it is *the government*, who having first contracted a great debt in depreciated money, are now compelling you to pay the interest at the rate of three for one. Whether this be *right*, or *wrong*, the Agriculturasses best know : it is much more their affair than it is mine ; but be you well assured that they are only at the beginning of their sorrows. Ah ! Patrick, whoever shall live only a few years will see a *grand change* in your state ! Something a *little more rational* than " Catholic Emancipation " will take place, or I am the most deceived of all mankind. This *debt* is your best, and, indeed, your *only friend*. It must, at last, give the *THING* a *shake*, such as it never had before. — The accounts which my country newspapers give of the failure of farmers are perfectly dismal. In many, many instances they have put an end to their existence, as the poor deluded creatures did who had been ruined by the South Sea Bubble ! I cannot help feeling for these people, for whom my birth, education, taste, and habits give me so strong a partiality. Who can help feeling for their wives and children, hurled down headlong from affluence to misery in the space of a few months ! Become all of a sudden the mockery of those whom they compelled, perhaps, to cringe before them !

If the labourers exult, one cannot say that it is unnatural. If *Reason* have her fair sway, I am exempted from all pain upon this occasion. I have done my best to prevent these calamities. Those farmers who have attended to me are safe while the storm rages. My endeavours to stop the evil in time cost me the earnings of twenty long years! I did not sink, no, nor *bend*, beneath the heavy and reiterated blows of the accursed system, which I have dealt back blow for blow; and, blessed be God, I now see it *reel*! It is staggering about like a sheep with water in the head: turning its pate up on one side: seeming to listen, but has no hearing: seeming to look, but has no sight: one day it capers and dances: the next it mopes and seems ready to die.

Nov. 4. *Sunday.*

This, to my fancy, is a very nice country. It is continual hill and dell. Now and then a *chain* of hills higher than the rest, and these are downs or woods. To stand upon any of the hills and look around you, you almost think you see the ups and downs of sea in a *heavy swell* (as the sailors call it) after what they call a gale of wind. The undulations are endless, and the great variety in the height, breadth, length, and form of the little hills, has a very delightful effect.—The soil, which, to look on it, appears to be more than half flint stones, is very good in quality, and, in general, better on the tops of the lesser hills than in the valleys. It has greater tenacity; does not *wash away* like sand, or light loam. It is a stiff, tenacious loam, mixed with flint stones. Bears saint-foin well, and all sorts of grass, which make the fields on the hills as green as meadows, even at this season; and the



grass does not burn up in summer.—In a country so full of hills one would expect endless runs of water and springs. There are none : absolutely none. No water-furrow is ever made in the land. No ditches round the fields. And, even in the *deep valleys*, such as that in which this village is situated, though it winds round for ten or fifteen miles, there is no run of water even now. There is the *bed* of a brook, which will run before spring, and it continues running with more or less water for about half the year, though, some years, it never runs at all. It rained all Friday night ; pretty nearly all day yesterday ; and to-day the ground is as dry as a bone, except just along the street of the village, which has been kept in a sort of stabble by the flocks of sheep passing along to and from Appleshaw fair. In the deep and long and narrow valleys, such as this, there are meadows with very fine herbage and very productive. The grass very fine and excellent in its quality. It is very curious, that the soil is much *shallower* in the vales than on the hills. In the vales it is a sort of hazle-mould on a bed of something approaching to gravel ; but, on the hills, it is stiff loam, with apparently half flints, on a bed of something like clay first (reddish, not yellow) and then comes the chalk, which they often take up by digging a sort of wells ; and then they spread it on the surface, as they do the clay in some countries, where they sometimes fetch it many miles and at an immense expense. It was very common, near Botley, to chalk land at an expense of sixteen pounds an acre.—The land here is excellent in quality generally, unless you get upon the highest chains of hills. They have frequently 40 bushels of wheat to the acre. Their barley is very fine ; and their saint-foin

abundant. The turnips are, in general, very good at this time ; and the land appears as capable of carrying fine crops of them as any land that I have seen. A fine country for sheep : always dry : they never injure the land when feeding off turnips in wet weather ; and they can lie down on the dry ; for the ground is, in fact, never wet except while the rain is actually falling. Sometimes, in spring-thaws and thunder-showers, the rain runs down the hills in torrents ; but is gone directly. The flocks of sheep, some in fold and some at large, feeding on the sides of the hills, give great additional beauty to the scenery.—The woods, which consist chiefly of oak thinly intermixed with ash, and well set with underwood of ash and hazel, but mostly the latter, are very beautiful. They sometimes stretch along the top and sides of hills for miles together ; and, as their edges, or outsides, joining the fields and the downs, go winding and twisting about, and as the fields and downs are naked of trees, the sight altogether is very pretty.—The trees in the deep and long valleys, especially the elm and the ash, are very fine and very lofty ; and, from distance to distance, the rooks have made them their habitation.—This sort of country, which, in irregular shape, is of great extent, has many and great advantages. Dry under foot. Good roads, winter as well as summer, and little, very little expense. Saint-foin flourishes. Fences cost little. Wood, hurdles, and hedging-stuff cheap. No shade in wet harvests. The water in the wells excellent. Good sporting country, except for coursing, and too many flints for that.—What becomes of all the *water* ? There is a spring, in one of the cross valleys that runs into this, having a basin about thirty feet over, and about eight



feet deep, which they say sends up water once in about 30 or 40 years ; and boils up so as to make a large current of water.—Not far from Uphusband the *Wansdike* (I think it is called) crosses the country. Sir Richard Colt Hoare has written a great deal about this ancient boundary, which is, indeed, something very curious. In the ploughed field the traces of it are quite gone ; but they remain in the *woods* as well as on the downs.

*Nov. 5. Monday.*

A *white frost* this morning. The hills round about beautiful at sun-rise, the rooks making that noise which they always make in winter mornings. The starlings are come in large flocks ; and, which is deemed a sign of a hard winter, the fieldfares are come at an early season. The haws are very abundant ; which, they say, is another sign of a hard winter. The wheat is high enough here, in some fields, “to hide a hare,” which is, indeed, not saying much for it, as a hare knows how to hide herself upon the bare ground. But it is, in some fields, four inches high, and is green and gay, the colour being finer than that of any grass.—The fuel here is wood. Little coal is brought from Andover. A load of faggots does not cost above 10s. So that, in this respect, the labourers are pretty well off. The wages here and in Berkshire, about 8s. a week ; but the farmers talk of lowering them.—The poor-rates heavy, and heavy they must be, till taxes and rents come down greatly.—Saturday and to-day Appleshaw sheep-fair. The sheep, which had taken a rise at Weyhill-fair, have fallen again even below the Norfolk and Sussex mark. Some South-Down lambs were sold at Appleshaw so low as 8s. and some even lower.

Some Dorsetshire ewes brought no more than a pound ; and, perhaps, the average did not exceed 28s. I have seen a farmer here who can get (or could a few days ago) 28s. round for a lot of fat South-Down wethers, which cost him just that money, when they were lambs, *two years ago* ! It is impossible that they can have cost him less than 24s. each during the two years, having to be fed on turnips or hay in winter, and to be fattened on good grass. Here (upon one hundred sheep) is a loss of £120 and £14 in addition at five per cent. interest on the sum expended in the purchase ; even suppose not a sheep has been lost by death or otherwise.—I mentioned before, I believe, that fat hogs are sold at Salisbury at from 5s. to 4s. 6d. the *score* pounds, dead weight.—Cheese has come down in the same proportion. A correspondent informs me that one hundred and fifty Welsh sheep were, on the 18th of October, offered for 4s. 6d. a head, and that they went away unsold ! The skin was worth a shilling of the money ! The following I take from the *Tyne Mercury* of the 30th of October. “ Last week, at Northawton fair, Mr. Thomas Cooper, of Bow, purchased three milch cows and forty sheep, for £18 16s. 6d. ! ” The skins, four years ago, would have sold for more than the money. The *Hampshire Journal* says, that, on 1 November (Thursday) at Newbury Market, wheat sold from 88s. to 24s. the quarter. This would make an average of 56s. But very little indeed was sold at 88s., only the prime of the old wheat. The best of the new for about 48s. and, then, if we take into view the great proportion that cannot go to market at all, we shall not find the average, even in this rather dear part of England, to exceed 32s., or 4s. a bushel. And, if we take all England through, it does



not come up to that, nor anything like it. A farmer very sensibly observed to me yesterday, that, "if we had had such a crop and such a harvest a few years ago, good wheat would have been £50 a load;" that is to say, 25s. a bushel! Nothing can be truer than this. And nothing can be clearer than that the present race of farmers, generally speaking, must be swept away by bankruptcy, if they do not, in time, make their bow, and retire. There are two descriptions of farmers, very distinct as to the effects which this change must naturally have on them. The word *farmer* comes from the French, *fermier*, and signifies *renter*. Those only who rent, therefore, are, properly speaking, *farmers*. Those who till their own land are *yeomen*; and, when I was a boy, it was the common practice to call the former *farmers* and the latter *yeoman-farmers*. These yeomen have, for the greater part, been swallowed up by the paper-system which has drawn such masses of money together. They have, by degrees, been *bought out*. Still there are some few left; and these, if not in debt, will stand their ground. But all the present race of mere renters must give way, in one manner or another. They must break, or drop their style greatly; even in the latter case, their rent must, very shortly, be diminished more than two-thirds. Then comes the *landlord's turn*; and the sooner the better.—In the *Maidstone Gazette* I find the following: "Prime beef was sold in Salisbury market, on Tuesday last, at 4d. per lb., and good joints of mutton at 3½d.; butter, 11d. and 12d. per lb.—In the west of Cornwall, during the summer, pork has often been sold at 2½d. per lb."—This is very true; and what can be better? How can Peel's Bill work in a more delightful manner?

What nice "*general working of events!*" The country rag-merchants have now very little to do. They have *no discounts*. What they have out they *owe*: it is so much *debt*: and, of course, they become poorer and poorer, because they must, like a mortgager, have more and more to pay as prices fall. This is very good: for it will make them disgorge a part, at least, of what they have swallowed, during the years of high prices and depreciation. They are worked in this sort of way: the tax-collectors, the excise-fellows, for instance, hold their sittings every six weeks, in certain towns about the country. They will receive the country rags, if the rag-man can find, and will give, security for the due payment of his rags, when they arrive in London. For want of such security, or of some formality of the kind, there was a great bustle in a town in this country not many days ago. The excise-fellow demanded sovereigns, or Bank of England notes. Precisely how the matter was finally settled I know not; but the reader will see that the exciseman was only taking a proper precaution; for, if the rags were not paid in London, the loss was his!

MARLBOROUGH,

*Tuesday noon, Nov. 6.*

I left Uphusband this morning at 9, and came across to this place (20 miles) in a post-chaise. Came up the valley of Uphusband, which ends at about 6 miles from the village, and puts one out upon the Wiltshire downs, which stretch away towards the west and south-west, towards Devizes and towards Salisbury. After about half-a-mile of down we came down into a level country; the flints cease, and the chalk comes nearer the top of



the ground. The labourers along here seem very poor indeed. Farm houses with twenty ricks round each, besides those standing in the fields; pieces of wheat, 50, 60, or 100 acres in a piece; but a group of women labourers, who were attending the measurers to measure their reaping work, presented such an assemblage of rags as I never before saw even amongst the hoppers at Farnham, many of whom are common beggars. I never before saw *country* people, and reapers, too, observe, so miserable in appearance as these. There were some very pretty girls, but ragged as colts and as pale as ashes. The day was cold too, and frost hardly off the ground; and their blue arms and lips would have made any heart ache but that of a seat-seller or a loan-jobber. A little after passing by these poor things, whom I left, cursing, as I went, those who had brought them to this state, I came to a group of shabby houses upon a hill. While a boy was watering his horses, I asked the ostler the *name* of the place; and, as the old women say, "you might have knocked me down with a feather," when he said, "*Great Bedwin.*" The whole of the houses are not intrinsically worth a thousand pounds. There stood a thing out in the middle of the place, about 25 feet long and 15 wide, being a room stuck up on unhewed stone pillars about 10 feet high. It was the Town Hall, where the ceremony of choosing the *two members* is performed. "This place sends members to parliament, don't it?" said I to the ostler. "Yes, sir." "Who are members *now*?" "I *don't know*, indeed, sir."—I have not read the *Henriade* of Voltaire for these 30 years; but in ruminating upon the ostler's answer; and in thinking how the world, yes, *the whole world*, has been deceived as

to this matter, two lines of that poem came across my memory :

Représentans du peuple, les Grands et le Roi :  
Spectacle magnifique ! Source sacrée des lois ! <sup>1</sup>

The Frenchman, for want of understanding the THING as well as I do, left the eulogium incomplete. I therefore here add four lines, which I request those who publish future editions of the *Henriade* to insert in continuation of the above eulogium of Voltaire.

Représentans du peuple, que celui-ci ignore,  
Sont fait à miracle pour garder son Or !  
Peuple trop heureux, que le bonheur inonde !  
L'envie de vos voisins, admiré du monde ! <sup>2</sup>

The first line was suggested by the ostler ; the last by the words which we so very often hear from the bar, the bench, the *seats*, the pulpit, and the throne. Doubtless my poetry is not equal to that of Voltaire ; but my rhyme is as good as his, and my *reason* is a great deal better.—In quitting this villainous place we see the extensive and uncommonly ugly park and domain of Lord Aylesbury, who seems to have tacked park on to park, like so many outworks of a fortified city. I suppose here are 50 or 100 farms of former days swallowed up. They have been bought, I dare say, from time to time ; and it would be a labour very well worthy of reward by the public, to trace to its source, the money by which these

<sup>1</sup> I will not swear to the very *words* ; but this is the meaning of Voltaire : " Representatives of the people, the Lords and the King : *Magnificent* spectacle ! *Sacred* source of the Laws ! "

<sup>2</sup> " Representatives of the people, of whom the people know nothing, must be miraculously well calculated to have the care of their money ! Oh ! people too happy ! overwhelmed with blessings ! The *envy* of your neighbours, and *admired* by the whole world ! "



immense domains, in different parts of the country, have been formed !—Marlborough, which is an ill-looking place enough, is succeeded, on my road to Swindon, by an extensive and very beautiful down about 4 miles over. (Here nature has flung the earth about in a great variety of shapes. The fine short smooth grass has about 9 inches of mould under it, and then comes the chalk. The water that runs down the narrow side-hill valleys is caught, in different parts of the down, in basins made on purpose, and lined with clay apparently. This is for watering the sheep in summer ; sure sign of a really dry soil ; and yet the grass never *parches* upon these downs. The chalk holds the moisture, and the grass is fed by the dews in hot and dry weather.—At the end of this down the high-country ends. The hill is high and steep, and from it you look immediately down into a level farming-country ; a little further on into the dairy-country, whence the North-Wilts cheese comes ; and, beyond that, into the vale of Berkshire, and even to Oxford, which lies away to the north-east from this hill.—The land continues good, flat, and rather wet to Swindon, which is a plain country town, built of the stone which is found at about 6 feet under ground about here.—I come in now towards Cirencester, through the dairy country of North Wilts.

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CIRENCESTER,

*Wednesday (noon), 7 Nov.*

I slept at a dairy-farm house at Hannington, about eight miles from Swindon, and five on one side of my road. I passed through that villainous hole, Cricklade, about two hours ago ; and, certainly, a more rascally looking place I never set my eyes on. I wished to avoid

it, but could get along no other way. All along here the land is a whitish stiff loam upon a bed of soft stone, which is found at various distances from the surface, sometimes two feet and sometimes ten. Here and there a field is fenced with this stone, laid together in walls without mortar or earth. All the houses and out-houses are made of it, and even covered with the thinnest of it formed into tiles. The stiles in the fields are made of large flags of this stone, and the gaps in the hedges are stopped with them.—There is very little wood all along here. The labourers seem miserably poor. Their dwellings are little better than pig-beds, and their looks indicate that their food is not nearly equal to that of a pig. Their wretched hovels are stuck upon little bits of ground *on the road side*, where the space has been wider than the road demanded. In many places they have not two rods to a hovel. It seems as if they had been swept off the fields by a hurricane, and had dropped and found shelter under the banks on the road side. Yesterday morning was a sharp frost ; and this had set the poor creatures to digging up their little plats of potatoes. In my whole life I never saw human wretchedness equal to this : no, not even amongst the free negroes in America, who, on an average, do not work one day out of four. And this is “ *prosperity*,” is it ? These, O Pitt ! are the fruits of thy hellish system ! However, this *Wiltshire* is a horrible county. This is the county that the *Gallon-loaf* man belongs to. The land all along here is good. Fine fields and pastures all around ; and yet the cultivators of those fields so miserable ! This is particularly the case on both sides of Cricklade, and in it too, where everything had the air of the most deplorable want.—



They are sowing wheat all the way from the Wiltshire downs to Cirencester ; though there is some wheat up. Winter vetches are up in some places, and look very well.—The turnips of both kinds are good all along here.—I met a farmer going with porkers to Highworth market. They would weigh, he said, four score and a half, and he expected to get 7*s.* 6*d.* a score. I expect he will not. He said they had been fed on barley-meal ; but I did not believe him. I put it to his honour, whether whey and beans had not been their food. He looked surly, and pushed on.—On this stiff ground, they grow a good many beans, and give them to the pigs with whey ; which makes excellent pork for the *Londoners* ; but which must meet with a pretty hungry stomach to swallow it in Hampshire. The hogs, all the way that I have come, from Buckinghamshire, are without a single exception that I have seen, the old-fashioned black-spotted hogs. Mr. Blount at Uphusband has one, which now weighs about thirty score, and will possibly weigh forty, for she moves about very easily yet. This is the weight of a good ox ; and yet, what a little thing it is compared to an ox ! Between Cricklade and this place (Cirencester) I met, in separate droves, about two thousand Welsh cattle, on their way from Pembrokeshire to the fairs in Sussex. The greater part of them were heifers in calf. They were purchased in Wales at from £3 to £4 10*s.* each ! None of them, the drovers told me, reached £5. These heifers used to fetch, at home, from £6 to £8, and sometimes more. Many of the things I saw in these droves did not fetch, in Wales, 25*s.* And they go to no *rising* market ! Now, is there a man in his senses who believes that this THING can go on in the

present way ? However, a fine thing, indeed, is this fall of prices ! My "cottager" will easily get his cow, and a young cow too, for less than the £5 that I talked of. These Welsh heifers will calve about May : and they are just the very thing for a cottager.

GLOUCESTER,

*Thursday (morning), Nov. 8.*

In leaving Cirencester, which is a pretty large town, a pretty nice town, and which the people call *Cititer*, I came up hill into a country, apparently formerly a down or common, but now divided into large fields by stone walls. Anything so ugly I have never seen before. The stone, which, on the other side of Cirencester, lay a good way under ground, here lies very near to the surface. The plough is continually bringing it up, and thus, in general, come the means of making the walls that serve as fences. Anything quite so cheerless as this I do not recollect to have seen ; for the Bagshot country, and the commons between Farnham and Haselemere, have *heath* at any rate ; but these stones are quite abominable. The turnips are not a *fiftieth* of a crop like those of Mr. Clarke at Bergh-Apton in Norfolk, or Mr. Pym at Reygate in Surrey, or of Mr. Brazier at Worth in Sussex. I see thirty acres here that have less *food* upon them than I saw the other day, upon half an acre at Mr. Budd's at Berghclere. Can it be good farming to plough and sow and hoe thirty acres to get what *may* be got upon half an acre ? Can that half acre cost more than a tenth part as much as the thirty acres ? But, if I were to go to this thirty-acre farmer, and tell him what to do to the half acre, would he not exclaim with the farmer at Botley :



“What! *drow* away all that ’ere ground between the *lains*! Jod’s blood!”—With the exception of a little dell about eight miles from Cititer, this miserable country continued to the distance of ten miles, when, all of a sudden, I looked down from the top of a high hill into *the vale of Gloucester*! Never was there, surely, such a contrast in this world! This hill is called *Burlip Hill*; it is much about a mile down it, and the descent so steep as to require the wheel of the chaise to be locked; and, even with that precaution I did not think it over and above safe to sit in the chaise; so, upon Sir Robert Wilson’s principle of taking care of *Number One*, I got out and walked down. From this hill you see the Morvan Hills in Wales. You look down into a sort of *dish* with a flat bottom, the Hills are the sides of the dish, and the City of Gloucester, which you plainly see, at seven miles distance from Burlip Hill, appears to be not far from the centre of the dish. All here is fine; fine farms; fine pastures; all inclosed fields; all divided by hedges; orchards a plenty; and I had scarcely seen one apple since I left Berkshire.—Gloucester is a fine, clean, beautiful place; and, which is of a vast deal more importance, the labourers’ dwellings, as I came along, looked good, and the labourers themselves pretty well as to dress and healthiness. The girls at work in the fields (always my standard) are not in rags, with bits of shoes tied on their feet and rags tied round their ankles, as they had in Wiltshire.

## KENTISH JOURNAL

FROM KENSINGTON TO DARTFORD, ROCHESTER,  
CHATHAM, AND FAVERSHAM

*Tuesday, 4 December, 1821.*

ELVERTON FARM, NEAR FAVERSHAM, KENT.

THIS is the first time, since I went to France, in 1792, that I have been on this side of *Shooters' Hill*. The land, generally speaking, from Deptford to Dartford, is poor, and the surface ugly by nature, to which ugliness there has been made, just before we came to the latter place, a considerable addition by the inclosure of a common, and by the sticking up of some shabby-genteel houses, surrounded with dead fences and things called gardens, in all manner of ridiculous forms, making, all together, the bricks, hurdle-rods and earth say, as plainly as they can speak, "*Here dwell vanity and poverty.*" This is a little excrescence that has grown out of the immense sums, which have been drawn from other parts of the kingdom to be expended on barracks, magazines, martello-towers, catamarans, and all the excuses for lavish expenditure, which the war for the Bourbons gave rise to. All things will return; these rubbishy flimsy things, on this common, will first be deserted, then crumble down, then be swept away, and the cattle, sheep, pigs and geese will once more graze upon the common, which will again furnish heath, furze and turf for the labourers

on the neighbouring lands.—After you leave Dartford the land becomes excellent. You come to a bottom of chalk, many feet from the surface, and when that is the case the land is sure to be good ; no *wet* at bottom, no deep ditches, no water furrows, necessary ; sufficiently moist in dry weather, and no water lying about upon it in wet weather for any length of time. The chalk acts as a filtering-stone, not as a sieve, like gravel, and not as a dish, like clay. The chalk acts as the soft stone in Herefordshire does ; but it is not so congenial to trees that have tap-roots.—Along through Gravesend towards Rochester the country presents a sort of gardening scene. Rochester (the bishop of which is, or lately was, *tax collector for London and Middlesex*), is a small but crowded place, lying on the south bank of the beautiful Medway, with a rising ground on the other side of the city. *Stroud*, which you pass through before you come to the bridge, over which you go to enter Rochester ; *Rochester* itself, and *Chatham*, form, in fact, one main street of about two miles and a half in length.—Here I was got into the scenes of my cap-and-feather days ! Here, at between sixteen and seventeen, I enlisted for a soldier. Upon looking up towards the fortifications and the barracks, how many recollections crowded into my mind ! The girls in these towns do not seem to be *so pretty* as they were thirty-eight years ago ; or am I not so quick in discovering beauties as I was then ? Have thirty-eight years corrected my taste, or made me a hypercritic in these matters ? Is it that I now look at them with the solemnness of a “ professional man,” and not with the enthusiasm and eagerness of an “ amateur ” ? I leave these questions for philosophers to solve. One



thing I will say for the young women of these towns, and that is, that I always found those of them that I had the great happiness to be acquainted with, evince a sincere desire to do their best to smooth the inequalities of life, and to give us, "brave fellows," as often as they could, strong beer, when their churlish masters or fathers or husbands would have drenched us to death with small. This, at the out-set of life, gave me a high opinion of the judgment and justice of the female sex; an opinion which has been confirmed by the observations of my whole life. —This Chatham has had some monstrous *wens* stuck on to it by the lavish expenditure of the war. These will moulder away. It is curious enough that I should meet with a gentleman in an inn at Chatham to give me a picture of the house-distress in that enormous wen, which during the war, was stuck on to Portsmouth. Not less than fifty thousand people had been drawn together there! These are now dispersing. The coagulated blood is diluting and flowing back through the veins. Whole streets are deserted, and the eyes of the houses knocked out by the boys that remain. The jack-daws, as much as to say, "Our turn to be inspired and to teach is come," are beginning to take possession of the Methodist chapels. The gentleman told me, that he had been down to Portsea to sell half a street of houses, left him by a relation; and that nobody would give him anything for them further than as very cheap fuel and rubbish! Good God! And is this "prosperity"? Is this the "prosperity of the war"? Have I not, for twenty long years, been regretting the existence of these unnatural embossments; these white-swellings, these odious wens, produced by *corruption* and engendering crime and misery and slavery?

We shall see the whole of these wens abandoned by the inhabitants, and, at last, the cannons on the fortifications may be of some use in battering down the buildings.— But what is to be the fate of the great wen of all ? The monster, called, by the silly coxcombs of the press, “ the metropolis of the empire ” ? What is to become of that multitude of towns that has been stuck up around it ? The village of Kingston was smothered in the town of Portsea ; and why ? Because taxes, drained from other parts of the kingdom, were brought thither.

The dispersion of the wen is the only real difficulty that I see in settling the affairs of the nation and restoring it to a happy state. But dispersed it *must* be ; and if there be half a million, or more, of people to suffer, the consolation is, that the suffering will be divided into half a million of parts. As if the swelling out of London, naturally produced by the funding system, were not sufficient ; as if the evil were not sufficiently great from the inevitable tendency of the system of loans and funds, our pretty gentlemen must resort to positive institutions to augment the population of the Wen. They found that the increase of the Wen produced an increase of thieves and prostitutes, an increase of all sorts of diseases, an increase of miseries of all sorts ; they saw that taxes drawn up to one point produced these effects ; they must have a “ *penitentiary*,” for instance, to check the evil, and that they must needs have in the Wen ! So that here were a million of pounds, drawn up in taxes, employed not only to keep the thieves and prostitutes still in the *Wen*, but to bring up to the Wen workmen to build the penitentiary, who and whose families, amounting, perhaps to thousands, make an addition to the cause of



that crime and misery, to check which is the object of the penitentiary! People would follow, they must follow, the million of money. However, this is of a piece with all the rest of their goings on. They and their predecessors, ministers and *House*, have been collecting together all the materials for a dreadful explosion; and if the explosion be not dreadful, other heads must point out the means of prevention.

*Wednesday, 5 Dec.*

The land on quitting Chatham is chalk at bottom; but, before you reach Sittingbourne, there is a vein of gravel and sand under, but a great depth of loam above. Above Sittingbourne the chalk bottom comes again, and continues on to this place, where the land appears to me to be as good as it can possibly be. Mr. William Waller, at whose house I am, has grown, this year, mangel-wurzel, the roots of which weigh, I think, on an average, twelve pounds, and in rows, too, at only about thirty inches distant from each other. In short, as far as *soil* goes, it is impossible to see a finer country than this. You frequently see a field of fifty acres, level as a die, clean as a garden and as rich. Mr. *Birkbeck* need not have crossed the Atlantic, and Alleghany into the bargain, to look for land *too rich to bear wheat*; for here is a plenty of it. In short, this is a country of hop-gardens, cherry, apple, pear and filbert orchards, and quickset hedges. But, alas! what, in point of *beauty*, is a country without woods and lofty trees! And here there are very few indeed. I am now sitting in a room, from the window of which I look, *first*, over a large and level field of rich land, in which the drilled wheat is finely



come up, and which is surrounded by clipped quickset hedges with a row of apple trees running by the sides of them ; *next*, over a long succession of rich meadows, which are here called marshes, the shortest grass upon which will fatten sheep or oxen ; *next*, over a little branch of the salt water which runs up to Faversham ; *beyond that*, on the Isle of Sheppey (or Shepway), which rises a little into a sort of ridge that runs along it ; rich fields, pastures and orchards lie all around me ; and yet, I declare, that I a million times to one prefer, as a spot to *live on*, the heaths, the miry coppices, the wild woods and the forests of Sussex and Hampshire.

*Thursday, 6 Dec.*

“ Agricultural distress ” is the great topic of general conversation. The *Webb Hallites* seem to prevail here. The fact is, farmers in general read nothing but the newspapers ; these, in the Wen, are under the control of the corruption of one or the other of the factions ; and in the country, nine times out of ten, under the control of the parsons and landlords, who are the magistrates, as they are pompously called, that is to say, Justices of the Peace. From such vehicles what are farmers to learn ? They are, in general, thoughtful and sensible men ; but their natural good sense is perverted by these publications, had it not been for which we never should have seen “ *a sudden transition from war to peace* ” lasting seven years, and more *sudden* in its destructive effects at last than at first. *Sir Edward Knatchbull* and *Mr. Honeywood* are the members of the “ Collective Wisdom ” for this county. The former was, till of late, a *tax-collector*. I hear that he is a great advocate for *corn-bills* !

I suppose he does not wish to let people who have *leases* see the bottom of the evil. He may get his rents for this year ; but it will be his last year, if the interest of the debt be not very greatly reduced. Some people here think that corn is *smuggled in* even now ! Perhaps it is, *upon the whole*, best that the delusion should continue for a year longer ; as that would tend to make the destruction of the system more sure, or, at least, make the cure more radical.

*Friday, 7 Dec.*

I went through *Faversham*. A very pretty little town, and just ten minutes' walk from the market-place up to the Dover turnpike-road. Here are the *powder-affairs* that Mr. Hume so well exposed. An immensity of buildings and expensive things. Why are not these premises let or sold ? However, this will never be done, until there be a *reformed parliament*. Pretty little *Van*, that beauty of all beauties ; that orator of all orators ; that saint of all saints ; that financier of all financiers, said that, if Mr. Hume were to pare down the expenses of government to *his* wish, there would be others, " the Hunts, Cobbetts, and Carliles, who would still want the expense to be less." I do not know *how low* Mr. Hume would wish to go ; but for myself I say, that if I ever have the power to do it, I will reduce the expenditure, and that in quick time too, down to what it was in the reign of Queen Anne ; that is to say, to less than is now paid to tax-gatherers for their labour in collecting the taxes ; and, monstrous as *Van* may think the idea, I do not regard it as impossible that I may have such power ; which I would certainly not employ to do an act of in-



*justice* to any human being, and would, at the same time, maintain the throne in more real splendour than that in which it is now maintained. But I would have nothing to do with any Vans, except as door-keepers or porters.

*Saturday, 8 Dec.*

Came home very much pleased with my visit to Mr. Walker, in whose house I saw no drinking of wine, spirits, or even beer ; where all, even to the little children, were up by candle-light in the morning, and where the most perfect sobriety was accompanied by constant cheerfulness. *Kent* is in a deplorable way. The farmers are skilful and intelligent, generally speaking. But there is infinite *corruption* in *Kent*, owing partly to the swarms of West Indians, nabobs, commissioners, and others of nearly the same description, that have selected it for the place of their residence ; but owing still more to the immense sums of public money that have, during the last thirty years, been expended in it. And when one thinks of these, the conduct of the people of Dover, Canterbury, and other places, in the case of the ever-lamented queen, does them everlasting honour. The *fruit* in *Kent* is more *select* than in Herefordshire, where it is raised for *cyder*, while, in *Kent*, it is raised for sale in its fruit state, a great deal being sent to the *Wen*, and a great deal being sent to the North of England and to Scotland. The orchards are beautiful indeed. Kept in the neatest order, and indeed, all belonging to them excels anything of the kind to be seen in Normandy ; and, as to apples, I never saw any so good in France as those of *Kent*. This county, so blessed by Providence, has been cursed by the system in a peculiar degree. It has been the *receiver* of immense



sums, raised on the other counties. This has puffed its *rents* to an unnatural height ; and now that the drain of other counties is stopped, it feels like a pampered pony, turned out in winter to live upon a common. It is in an extremely "unsatisfactory state," and has certainly a greater mass of suffering to endure than any other part of the kingdom, the *Wens* only excepted. Sir Edward Knatchbull, who is a child of the system, does appear to see no more of the cause of these sufferings than if he were a baby. How should he ? Not very bright by nature ; never listening but to one side of the question ; being a man who wants high rents to be paid him ; not gifted with much light, and that little having to strive against prejudice, false shame, and self-interest, what wonder is there that he should not see things in their true light ?

SUSSEX JOURNAL  
TO BATTLE, THROUGH BROMLEY, SEVENOAKS,  
AND TUNBRIDGE

BATTLE,  
*Wednesday, 2 Jan. 1822.*

CAME here to-day from Kensington, in order to see what goes on at the meeting to be held here to-morrow, of the "gentry, clergy, freeholders, and occupiers of land in the Rape of Hastings, to take into consideration the distressed state of the agricultural interest." I shall, of course, give an account of this meeting after it has taken place.—You come through part of *Kent* to get to *Battle* from the Great *Wen* on the Surrey side of the Thames. The first town is Bromley, the next Seven-Oaks, the next Tunbridge, and between Tunbridge and this place you cross the boundaries of the two counties.—From the Surrey *Wen* to Bromley the land is generally a deep loam on a gravel, and you see few trees except elm. A very ugly country. On quitting Bromley the land gets poorer; clay at bottom; the wheat sown on five, or seven, turn lands; the furrows shining with wet; rushes on the wastes on the sides of the road. Here there is a common, part of which has been inclosed and thrown out again, or, rather, the fences carried away.—There is a frost this morning, some ice, and the women look rosy-cheeked.—There is a very great variety of soil along this road; bottom

of yellow clay ; then of sand ; then of sand-stone ; then of solider stone ; then (for about five miles) of chalk ; then of red clay ; then chalk again ; here (before you come to Seven-Oaks) is a most beautiful and rich valley, extending from east to west, with rich cornfields and fine trees ; then comes sand-stone again ; and the hop-gardens near Seven-Oaks, which is a pretty little town with beautiful environs, part of which consists of the park of *Knowle*, the seat of the Duchess of Dorset. It is a very fine place. And there is another park, on the other side of the town. So that this is a delightful place, and the land appears to be very good. The gardens and houses all look neat and nice. On quitting Seven-Oaks you come to a bottom of gravel for a short distance, and to a clay for many miles. When I say that I saw teams *carting* gravel from this spot, to a distance of nearly *ten miles* along the road, the reader will be at no loss to know what sort of bottom the land has all along here. The bottom then becomes sand-stone again. This vein of land runs all along through the county of Sussex, and the clay runs into Hampshire, across the forests of Bere and Waltham, then across the parishes of Ouslebury, Stoke, and passing between the sand hills of Southampton and chalk hills of Winchester, goes westward till stopped by the chalky downs between Romsey and Salisbury.—Tunbridge is a small but very nice town, and has some fine meadows and a navigable river.—The rest of the way to Battle presents, alternately, clay and sand-stone. Of course the coppices and oak woods are very frequent. There is now and then a hop-garden spot, and now and then an orchard of apples or cherries ; but these are poor indeed compared with what you see about Canterbury



and Maidstone. The agricultural state of the country or, rather, the quality of the land, from Bromley to Battle, may be judged of from the fact, that I did not see, as I came along, more than thirty acres of swedes during the fifty-six miles ! In Norfolk, I should, in the same distance, have seen five hundred acres ! However, man was not the maker of the land ; and, as to human happiness, I am of opinion that as much, and even more, falls to the lot of the leather-legged chaps that live in and rove about amongst those clays and woods as to the more regularly disciplined labourers of the rich and prime parts of England. As “ God has made the back to the burthen,” so the clay and coppice people make the dress to the stubs and bushes. Under the sole of the shoe is *iron* ; from the sole six inches upwards is a high-low ; then comes a leather bam to the knee ; then comes a leather pair of breeches ; then comes a stout doublet ; over this comes a smock-frock ; and the wearer sets brush and stubs and thorns and mire at defiance. I have always observed that woodland and forest labourers are best off in the main. The coppices give them pleasant and profitable work in winter. If they have not so great a corn-harvest, they have a three weeks’ harvest in April or May ; that is to say, in the season of barking, which in Hampshire is called *stripping*, and in Sussex *flaying*, which employs women and children as well as men. And then in the great article of *fuel* ! They *buy* none. It is miserable work where this is to be bought, and where, as at Salisbury, the poor take by turns the making of fires at their houses to boil four or five tea-kettles. What a winter-life must those lead, whose turn it is not to make the fire ! At Launceston

in Cornwall a man, a tradesman too, told me, that the people in general could not afford to have fire in ordinary, and that he himself paid 3*d.* for boiling a leg of mutton at another's man's fire ! The leather-legged race know none of these miseries, at any rate. They literally get their fuel "by *hook* or by *crook*," whence, doubtless, comes that old and very expressive saying, which is applied to those cases where people *will have a thing* by one means or another.

BATTLE,

*Thursday (night), 3 Jan. 1822.*

To-day there has been a *meeting* here of the landlords and farmers in this part of Sussex, which is called the *Rape of Hastings*. The object was to agree on a petition to parliament praying for *relief* ! Good God ! Where is this to *end* ? We now see the effects of those *rags* which I have been railing against for the last twenty years. Here were collected together not less than 300 persons, principally landlords and farmers, brought from their homes by their distresses and by their alarms for the future ! Never were such things heard in any country before ; and it is useless to hope, for terrific must be the consequences, if an effectual remedy be not speedily applied. The town, which is small, was in a great bustle before noon ; and the meeting (in a large room in the principal inn) took place about one o'clock. Lord Ashburnham was called to the chair, and there were present Mr. Curteis, one of the county members, Mr. Fuller, who formerly used to cut *such a figure* in the House of Commons, Mr. Lambe, and many other gentlemen of landed property within the rape, or district, for which the



meeting was held. Mr. Curteis, after Lord Ashburnham had opened the business, addressed the meeting.

Mr. Fuller then tendered some resolutions, describing the fallen state of the landed interest, and proposing to pray, *generally*, for relief. Mr. Britton complained that it was not proposed to pray for some *specific measure*, and insisted that the cause of the evil was the rise in the value of money without a corresponding reduction in the taxes.—A committee was appointed to draw up a petition, which was next produced. It merely described the distress, and prayed generally for relief. Mr. Holloway proposed an addition, containing an imputation of the distress to restricted currency and unabated taxation, and praying for a reduction of taxes. A discussion now arose upon two points : first, whether the addition were admissible at all ! and, second, whether Mr. Holloway was qualified to offer it to the meeting. Both the points having been, at last, decided in the affirmative, the addition, or amendment, was put, and *lost* ; and then the original petition was adopted.

After the business of the day was ended, there was a dinner in the inn, in the same room where the meeting had been held. I was at this dinner ; and Mr. Britton having proposed my health, and Mr. Curteis, who was in the chair, having given it, I thought it would have looked like mock-modesty, which is, in fact, only another term for hypocrisy, to refrain from expressing my opinions upon a point or two connected with the business of the day. I shall now insert a substantially correct sketch of what the company was indulgent enough to hear from me at the dinner ; which I take from the report, contained in the *Morning Chronicle* of Saturday last. The



report in the *Chronicle* has all the *pith* of what I advanced relative to the *inutility of Corn Bills*, and relative to the *cause of further declining prices* ; two points of the greatest importance in themselves, and which I was, and am, uncommonly anxious to press upon the attention of the public.

The following is a part of the speech so reported :

I am decidedly of opinion, gentlemen, that a Corn Bill of no description, no matter what its principles or provisions, can do either tenant or landlord any good ; and I am not less decidedly of opinion, that though prices are now low, they must, all the present train of public measures continuing, be yet lower, and continue lower upon an average of years and of seasons.—As to a Corn Bill ; a law to prohibit or check the importation of human food is a perfect novelty in our history, and ought, therefore, independent of the reason, and the recent experience of the case, to be received and entertained with great suspicion. Heretofore, *premiums* have been given for the exportation, and at other times for the importation, of corn ; but of laws to prevent the importation of human food our ancestors knew nothing. And what says recent experience ? When the present Corn Bill was passed, I, then a farmer, unable to get my brother farmers to join me, *petitioned singly* against this Bill ; and I stated to my brother farmers, that such a Bill could do us no good, while it would not fail to excite against us the ill-will of the other classes of the community ; a thought by no means pleasant. Thus has it been. The distress of agriculture was considerable in magnitude then ; but what is it now ? And yet the Bill was passed ; that Bill which was to remunerate and

protect is still in force ; the farmers got what they prayed to have granted them ; and their distress, with a short interval of tardy pace, has proceeded rapidly increasing from that day to this. What, in the way of Corn Bill, can you have, gentlemen, beyond absolute prohibition ? And have you not, since about April, 1819, had absolute prohibition ? Since that time no corn has been imported, and then only thirty millions of bushels, which, supposing it all to have been wheat, was a quantity much too insignificant to produce any sensible depression in the price of the immense quantity of corn raised in this kingdom since the last bushel was imported. If your produce had fallen in this manner, if your prices had come down very low, immediately after the importation had taken place, there might have been some colour of reason to impute the fall to the importation ; but it so happens, and as if for the express purpose of contradicting the crude notions of Mr. Webb Hall, that your produce has fallen in price at a greater rate, in proportion as time has removed you from the point of importation ; and as to the circumstance, so ostentatiously put forward by Mr. Hall and others, that there is still some of the imported corn *unsold*, what does it prove but the converse of what those gentlemen aim at, that is to say, that the holders *cannot afford* to sell it at present prices ; for, if they could gain but ever so little by the sale, would they keep it wasting and costing money in warehouses ? There appears with some persons to be a notion, that the importation of corn is a *new thing*. They seem to forget, that, during the last war, when agriculture was so *prosperous*, the *ports were always open* ; that prodigious quantities of corn were imported during the war ; that, so far from impor-



tation being prohibited, high *premiums* were given, paid out of the taxes, partly raised upon English farmers, to induce men to import corn. All this seems to be forgotten as much as if it had never taken place ; and now the distress of the English farmer is imputed to a cause which was never before an object of his attention, and a desire is expressed to put an end to a branch of commerce which the nation has always freely carried on. I think, gentlemen, that here are reasons quite sufficient to make any man but Mr. Webb Hall slow to impute the present distress to the importation of corn ; but, at any rate, what can you have beyond absolute efficient prohibition ? No law, no duty, however high ; nothing that the parliament can do can go beyond this ; and this you now have, in effect, as completely as if this were the only country beneath the sky. For these reasons, gentlemen (and to state more would be a waste of your time and an affront to your understandings), I am convinced, that, in the way of Corn Bill, it is impossible for the parliament to afford you any, even the smallest, portion of relief. As to the other point, gentlemen, the tendency which the present measures and course of things have to carry prices *lower*, and considerably lower than they now are, and to keep them for a permanency at that low rate, this is a matter worthy of the serious attention of all connected with the land, and particularly of that of the renting farmer. During the war no importations distressed the farmer. It was not till peace came that the cry of distress was heard. But, during the war, there was a boundless issue of paper money. Those issues were instantly narrowed by the peace, the law being that the bank should pay in cash six months after the peace



should take place. This was the cause of that distress which led to the present Corn Bill. The disease occasioned by the preparations for cash-payments has been brought to a crisis by Mr. Peel's Bill, which has, in effect, doubled, if not tripled, the real amount of the taxes, and violated all contracts for time ; given triple gains to every lender, and placed every borrower in jeopardy.

KENSINGTON,

*Friday, 4 Jan. 1822.*

Got home from *Battle*. I had no time to see the town, having entered the inn on Wednesday in the dusk of the evening, having been engaged all day yesterday in the inn, and having come out of it only to get into the coach this morning. I had not time to go even to see *Battle Abbey*, the seat of the Webster family, now occupied by a man of the name of *Alexander* ! Thus they *replace them* ! It will take a much shorter time than most people imagine to put out all the ancient families. I should think, that six years will turn out all those who receive nothing out of taxes. The greatness of the estate is no protection to the owner ; for, great or little, it will soon yield him *no rents* ; and when the produce is nothing in either case, the small estate is as good as the large one. Mr. Curteis said, that the *land* was *immovable* ; yes, but the *rents are not*. And if freeholds cannot be seized for common contract debts, the carcass of the owner may. But, in fact, there will be no rents ; and, without these, the ownership is an empty sound. Thus, at last, the burthen will, as I always said it would, fall upon the *landowner* ; and, as the fault of supporting the system has been wholly his, the burthen will fall upon the *right*

*back.* Whether he will now call in the people to help him to shake it off is more than I can say ; but, if he do not, I am sure that he must sink under it. And then, will *revolution No. I.* have been accomplished ; but far, and very far indeed, will that be from being the *close* of the drama !—I cannot quit Battle without observing that the country is very pretty all about it. All hill or valley. A great deal of woodland, in which the underwood is generally very fine, though the oaks are not very fine, and a good deal covered with *moss*. This shows that the clay ends before the *tap-root* of the oak gets as deep as it would go ; for when the clay goes the full depth the oaks are always fine.—The woods are too large and too near each other for hare-hunting ; and as to coursing it is out of the question here. But it is a fine country for shooting and for harbouring game of all sorts.—It was rainy as I came home ; but the woodmen were at work. A great many *hop-poles* are cut here, which makes the coppices more valuable than in many other parts. The women work in the coppices, shaving the bark of the hop-poles, and, indeed, at various other parts of the business. These poles are shaved to prevent *maggots* from breeding in the bark and accelerating the destruction of the pole. It is curious that the bark of trees should generate maggots ; but it has, as well as the wood, a *sugary* matter in it. The hickory wood in America sends out from the ends of the logs when these are burning great quantities of the finest syrup that can be imagined. Accordingly, that wood breeds maggots, or worms as they are usually called, surprisingly. Our *ash* breeds worms very much. When the tree or pole is cut, the moist matter between the outer bark and the wood,



putrifies. Thence come the maggots, which soon begin to eat their way into the wood. For this reason the bark is shaved off the hop-poles, as it ought to be off all our timber trees, as soon as cut, especially the ash.—Little boys and girls shave hop-poles and assist in other coppice work very nicely. And it is pleasant work when the weather is dry over head. The woods, bedded with leaves as they are, are clean and dry underfoot. They are warm too, even in the coldest weather. When the ground is frozen several inches deep in the open fields, it is scarcely frozen at all in a coppice where the underwood is a good plant, and where it is nearly high enough to cut. So that the woodman's is really a pleasant life. We are apt to think that the birds have a hard time of it in winter. But we forget the warmth of the woods, which far exceeds anything to be found in farmyards. When Sidmouth started me from my farm, in 1817, I had just planted my farmyard round with a pretty coppice. But, never mind, Sidmouth, and I shall, I dare say, have plenty of time and occasion to talk about that coppice, and many other things, before we die. And, can I, when I think of these things now, *pity* those to whom Sidmouth *owed his power* of starting me!—But let me forget the subject for this time at any rate.—Woodland countries are interesting on many accounts. Not so much on account of their masses of green leaves, as on account of the variety of sights and sounds and incidents that they afford. Even in winter the coppices are beautiful to the eye, while they comfort the mind with the idea of shelter and warmth. In spring they change their hue from day to day during two whole months, which is about the time from the first appearance of the



delicate leaves of the birch to the full expansion of those of the ash ; and even before the leaves come at all to intercept the view, what in the vegetable creation is so delightful to behold as the bed of a coppice bespangled with primroses and bluebells ? The opening of the birch leaves is the signal for the pheasant to begin to crow, for the blackbird to whistle, and for the thrush to sing ; and just when the oak-buds begin to look reddish, and not a day before, the whole tribe of finches burst forth in songs from every bough, while the lark, imitating them all, carries the joyous sounds to the sky. These are amongst the means which Providence has benignantly appointed to sweeten the toils by which food and raiment are produced ; these the English Ploughman could once hear without the sorrowful reflection that he himself was *a pauper*, and that the bounties of nature had, for him, been scattered in vain ! And shall he never see an end to this state of things ! Shall he never have the due reward of his labour ! Shall unsparing taxation never cease to make him a miserable dejected being, a creature famishing in the midst of abundance, fainting, expiring with hunger's feeble moans, surrounded by a carolling creation ! Oh ! accursed paper-money ! Has hell a torment surpassing the wickedness of thy inventor !

A RUSTIC HARANGUE DELIVERED AT WINCHESTER,  
AT A DINNER WITH THE FARMERS, ON THE  
28TH SEPTEMBER.

WINCHESTER,  
*Sunday morning, 29 Sept.*

YESTERDAY was market-day here. Everything cheap and falling instead of rising. If it were *over-production*

last year that produced the *distress*, when are our miseries to have an end ! They will end when these men cease to have sway, and not before.

I had not been in Winchester long before I heard something very interesting about the *manifesto* concerning the poor, which was lately issued here, and upon which I remarked in my last Register but one, in my letter to Sir Thomas Baring. Proceeding upon the true military principle, I looked out for free quarter, which the reader will naturally think difficult for *me* to find in a town containing a *cathedral*. Having done this, I went to the Swan Inn to dine with the farmers. This is the manner that I like best of doing the thing. *Six-Acts* do not, to be sure, prevent us from *dining* together. They do not authorise justices of the peace to kill us, because we meet to dine without their permission. But I do not like dinner-meetings on *my* account. I like much better to go and fall in with the lads of the land, or with anybody else, at their own places of resort ; and I am going to place myself down at Uphusband, in excellent free-quarter, in the midst of all the great fairs of the west, in order, before the winter campaign begins, that I may see as many farmers as possible, and that they may hear my opinions, and I theirs. I shall be at Weyhill Fair on the 10th of October, and, perhaps, on some of the succeeding days ; and, on one or more of those days, I intend to dine at the White Hart, at Andover. What other fairs or places I shall go to I shall notify here after. And this I think the frankest and fairest way. I wish to see many people, and to talk to them : and there are a great many people who wish to see and to talk to me. What better reason can be given for a



man's going about the country and dining at fairs and markets ?

At the dinner at Winchester we had a good number of opulent yeomen, and many gentlemen joined us after the dinner. The state of the country was well talked over ; and, during the *session* (much more sensible than some other *sessions* that I have had to remark on), I made the following

#### RUSTIC HARANGUE

GENTLEMEN,—Though many here are, I am sure, glad to *see me*, I am not vain enough to suppose that anything other than that of wishing to hear my opinions on the prospects before us can have induced many to choose to be here to dine with me to-day. I shall, before I sit down, propose to you a *toast*, which you will drink, or not, as you choose ; but, I shall state one particular wish in that shape, that it may be the more distinctly understood, and the better remembered.

The wish to which I allude relates to the *tithes*. Under that word I mean to speak of all that mass of wealth which is vulgarly called *church property* ; but which is, in fact, *public property*, and may, of course, be disposed of as the Parliament shall please. There appears at this moment an uncommon degree of anxiety on the part of the parsons to see the farmers enabled to pay *rents*. The business of the parsons being only with *tithes*, one naturally, at first sight, wonders why they should care so much about *rents*. The fact is this ; they see clearly enough, that the landlords will never long go without rents and suffer them to enjoy the tithes. They see, too, that there must be a struggle between the *land* and the *funds* : they see that there is such a struggle. They see, that it is the



taxes that are taking away the rent of the landlord and the capital of the farmer. Yet the parsons are afraid to see the taxes reduced. Why ? Because, if the taxes be reduced in any great degree (and nothing short of a great degree will give relief), they see that the interest of the debt cannot be paid ; and they know well, that the interest of the debt can never be reduced, until their tithes have been reduced. Thus, then, they find themselves in a great difficulty. They wish the taxes to be kept up and rents to be paid too. Both cannot be, unless some means or other be found out of putting into, or keeping in, the farmer's pocket, money that is not now there.

The scheme that appears to have been fallen upon for this purpose is the strangest in the world, and it must, if attempted to be put into execution, produce something little short of open and general commotion ; namely, that of reducing the wages of labour to a mark so low as to make the labourer a walking skeleton. Before I proceed further, it is right that I communicate to you an explanation, which, not an hour ago, I received from Mr. Poulter, relative to the *manifesto* lately issued in this town by a bench of magistrates of which that gentleman was chairman. I have not the honour to be personally acquainted with Mr. Poulter, but certainly, if I had misunderstood the manifesto, it was right that I should be, if possible, made to understand it. Mr. Poulter, in company with another gentleman, came to me in this inn, and said, that the bench did not mean that their resolutions should have the effect of *lowering the wages* ; and that the sums, stated in the paper, were sums to be given in the way of *relief*. We had not the paper before us,

and, as the paper contained a good deal about relief, I, in recollection, confounded the two, and said, that I had understood the paper agreeably to the explanation. But, upon looking at the paper again, I see that, as to the *words*, there was a clear recommendation to make the *wages* what is there stated. However, seeing that the chairman himself disavows this, we must conclude that the bench put forth words not expressing their meaning. To this I must add, as connected with the manifesto, that it is stated in that document, that such and such justices were present, and a large and respectable number of yeomen who had been invited to attend. Now, gentlemen, I was, I must confess, struck with this addition to the bench. These gentlemen have not been accustomed to treat farmers with so much attention. It seemed odd that they should want a set of farmers to be present, to give a sort of sanction to their acts. Since my arrival in Winchester, I have found, however, that having them present was not all ; for that the names of some of these yeomen were actually inserted in the manuscript of the manifesto, and that those names were expunged *at the request of the parties named*. This is a very singular proceeding, then, altogether. It presents to us a strong picture of the diffidence, or modesty (call it which you please) of the justices ; and it shows us, that the yeomen present did not like to have *their names* standing as giving sanction to the resolutions contained in the manifesto. Indeed, they knew well, that those resolutions never could be acted upon. They knew that they could not live in safety even in the same village with labourers, paid at the rate of 3, 4, and 5 shillings a week.



To return, now, gentlemen, to the scheme for squeezing rents out of the bones of the labourer, is it not, upon the face of it, most monstrously absurd, that this scheme should be resorted to, when the plain and easy and just way of insuring rents must present itself to every eye, and can be pursued by the Parliament whenever it chooses? We hear loud outcries against the poor-rates; the *enormous* poor-rates; the *all-devouring* poor-rates; but what are the facts? Why, that, in Great Britain, *six millions* are paid in poor-rates; *seven millions* (or thereabouts) in *tithes*, and *sixty millions* to the fund-people, the army, placemen, and the rest. And yet, nothing of all this seems to be thought of but the *six millions*. Surely the other and so much larger sums ought to be thought of. Even the *six millions* are, for the greater part, *wages* and not poor-rates. And yet all this outcry is made about these *six millions*, while not a word is said about the other *sixty-seven millions*.

Gentlemen, to enumerate all the ways in which the public money is spent would take me a week. I will mention two classes of persons who are receivers of taxes; and you will then see with what *reason* it is that this outcry is set up against the poor-rates and against the amount of wages. There is a thing called the *Dead Weight*. Incredible as it may seem that such a vulgar appellation should be used in such a way and by such persons, it is a fact that the ministers have laid before the Parliament an account, called the account of the *Dead Weight*. This account tells how five millions three hundred thousand pounds are distributed annually amongst half-pay officers, pensioners, retired commissaries, clerks, and so forth, employed during the last



war. If there were nothing more entailed upon us by that war, this is pretty smart-money. Now unjust, unnecessary as that war was, detestable as it was in all its principles and objects, still, to every man, who really did *fight*, or who performed a soldier's duty abroad, I would give *something* : he should not be left destitute. But, gentlemen, is it right for the nation to keep on paying for life crowds of young fellows such as make up the greater part of this *dead weight* ? This is not all, however, for, there are the widows and the children who have, and are to have, *pensions too*. You seem surprised, and well you may ; but this is the fact. A young fellow who has a pension for life, aye, or an old fellow either, will easily get a wife to enjoy it with him, and he will, I'll warrant him, take care that *she* shall not be *old*. So that here is absolutely a premium for entering into the holy state of matrimony. The husband, you will perceive, cannot prevent the wife from having the pension after his death. She is *our widow*, in this respect, not his. She marries, in fact, with a jointure settled on her. The more children the husband leaves the better for the widow ; for each child has a pension for a certain number of years. The man who, under such circumstances, does not marry, must be a woman-hater. An old man actually going into the grave may, by the mere ceremony of marriage, give any woman a pension for life. Even the widows and children of insane officers are not excluded. If an officer, now insane, but at large, were to marry, there is nothing as the thing now stands to prevent his widow and children from having pensions. Were such things as these ever before heard of in the world ? Were such premiums ever before given for

breeding gentlemen and ladies, and that, too, while all sorts of projects are on foot to check the breeding of the labouring classes? Can such a thing *go on*? I say it cannot; and, if it could, it must inevitably render this country the most contemptible upon the face of the earth. And yet, not a word of complaint is heard about these five millions and a quarter, expended in this way, while the country rings, fairly resounds, with the outcry about the six millions that are given to the labourers in the shape of poor-rates, but which, in fact, go, for the greater part, to pay what ought to be called *wages*. Unless, then, we speak out here; unless we call for redress here; unless we here seek relief, we shall not only be totally ruined, but we shall *deserve it*.

The other class of persons, to whom I have alluded, as having taxes bestowed on them, are the *poor clergy*. Not of the *church* as by *law* established, to be sure, you will say! Yes, gentlemen, even to the poor clergy of the Established Church. We know well how *rich* that church is; we know well how many millions it annually receives; we know how opulent are the bishops, how rich they die; how rich, in short, a body it is. And yet *fifteen hundred thousand pounds* have, within the same number of years, been given, out of the taxes, partly raised on the labourers, for the relief of the *poor* clergy of that Church, while it is notorious that the livings are given in numerous cases by twos and threes to the same person, and while a clamour, enough to make the sky ring, is made about what is given in the shape of *relief to the labouring classes*! Why, gentlemen, what do we want more than this one fact? Does not this one fact sufficiently characterise the system under which we live?



Does not this prove that a change, a great change, is wanted? Would it not be more natural to propose to get this money back from the Church, than to squeeze so much out of the bones of the labourers? This the Parliament can do if it pleases; and this it will do, if you do your duty.

Passing over several other topics, let me, gentlemen, now come to what, at the present moment, most nearly affects you; namely, the *prospect as to prices*. In the first place, this depends upon whether Peel's Bill will be repealed. As this depends a good deal upon the ministers, and as I am convinced that they know no more what to do in the present emergency than the little boys and girls that are running up and down the street before this house, it is impossible for me, or for any one, to say what will be done in this respect. But, my opinion is decided, that the Bill will *not* be repealed. The ministers see that, if they were *now* to go back to the paper, it would not be the paper of 1819; but a paper never to be redeemed by gold; that it would be *assignats* to all intents and purposes. That must of necessity cause the complete overthrow of the Government in a very short time. If, therefore, the ministers see the thing in this light, it is impossible that they should think of a repeal of Peel's Bill. There appeared, last winter, a strong disposition to repeal the Bill; and I verily believe that a repeal in effect, though not in name, was actually in contemplation. A Bill was brought in which was described beforehand as intended to prolong the issue of small notes, and also to prolong the time for making Bank of England notes a legal tender. This would have been a repealing of Peel's Bill in great part. The Bill,



when brought in, and when passed, as it finally was, contained no clause relative to legal tender ; and without that clause it was perfectly nugatory. Let me explain to you, gentlemen, what this Bill really is. In the seventeenth year of the late king's reign, an Act was passed for a time limited, to prevent the issue of notes payable to bearer on demand, for any sums less than five pounds. In the twenty-seventh year of the late king's reign, this Act was made *perpetual* ; and the preamble of the Act sets forth, that it is made perpetual, because the *preventing of small notes being made has been proved to be for the good of the nation*. Nevertheless, in just ten years afterwards ; that is to say, in the year one thousand seven hundred and ninety-seven, when the bank stopped payment, this salutary Act was *suspended* ; indeed, it was absolutely necessary, for there was no gold to pay with. It continued suspended, until 1819, when Mr. Peel's Bill was passed, when a Bill was passed to suspend it still further, until the year 1825. You will observe, then, that last winter there were yet three years to come, during which the banks might make small notes if they would. Yet this new Bill was passed last winter to authorise them to make small notes until the year 1833. The measure was wholly uncalled for. It appeared to be altogether unnecessary ; but, as I have just said, the intention was to introduce into this Bill a clause to continue the *legal tender* until 1833 ; and that would, indeed, have made a great alteration in the state of things ; and, if extended to the Bank of England, would have been, in effect, a complete repeal of Peel's Bill.

It was fully expected by the country bankers, that the legal tender clause would have been inserted ; but, before

it came to the trial, the ministers gave way, and the clause was not inserted. The reason for their giving way, I do verily believe, had its principal foundation in their perceiving, that the public would clearly see that such a measure would make the paper-money merely assignats. The legal tender not having been enacted, the Small-note Bill can do nothing towards augmenting the quantity of circulating medium. As the law now stands, Bank of England notes are, in effect, a *legal tender*. If I owe a debt of twenty pounds, and tender Bank of England notes in payment, the law says that you shall not arrest me ; that you may bring your action, if you like ; that I may pay the notes into court ; that you may go on with your action ; that you shall pay all the costs, and I none. At last you gain your action ; you obtain judgment and execution, or whatever else the everlasting law allows of. And what have you got then ? Why the *notes* ; the same identical notes the sheriff will bring you. You will not take them. Go to law with the sheriff then. He pays the *notes* into court. More costs for you to pay. And thus you go on ; but without ever touching or seeing gold !

Now, gentlemen, Peel's Bill puts an end to all this pretty work on the first day of next May. If you have a handful of a country banker's rags *now*, and go to him for payment, he will tender you Bank of England notes ; and if you like the paying of costs you may go to law for gold. But when the first of next May comes, he must put gold into your hands in exchange for your notes, if you choose it ; or you may clap a bailiff's hand upon his shoulder ; and if he choose to pay into court, he must pay in gold, and pay your costs also as far as you have gone.



This makes a strange alteration in the thing! And everybody must see that the Bank of England and the country bankers—that all, in short, are preparing for the first of May. It is clear that there must be a further diminution of the paper-money. It is hard to say the precise degree of effect that this will have upon prices; but that it must bring them down is clear; and, for my own part, I am fully persuaded, that they will come down to the standard of prices in France, be those prices what they may. This, indeed, was acknowledged by Mr. Huskisson in the Agricultural Report of 1821. That two countries so near together, both having gold as a currency or standard, should differ very widely from each other, in the price of farm-produce, is next to impossible; and therefore, when our legal tender shall be completely done away, to the prices of France you must come; and those prices cannot, I think, in the present state of Europe, much exceed three or four shillings a bushel for good wheat.

You know, as well as I do, that it is impossible, with the present taxes and rates and tithes, to pay any rent at all with prices upon that scale. Let loan-jobbers, stock-jobbers, Jews, and the whole tribe of tax-eaters say what they will, you know that it is impossible, as you also know it would be cruelly unjust to wring from the labourer the means of paying rent, while those taxes and tithes remain. Something must be taken off. The labourers' wages have already been reduced as low as possible. All public pay and salaries ought to be reduced; and the tithes also ought to be reduced; as they might be to a great amount without any injury to religion. The interest of the debt ought to be largely



reduced ; but, as none of the others can, with any show of justice, take place, without a reduction of the tithes, and as I am for confining myself to one object at present, I will give you as a toast, leaving you to drink it or not as you please, *A large Reduction of Tithes.*

Somebody proposed to drink this toast with *three times three*, which was accordingly done, and the sound might have been heard down to the close.

FROM DOVER, THROUGH THE ISLE OF THANET,  
BY CANTERBURY AND FAVERSHAM, ACROSS  
TO MAIDSTONE, UP TO TONBRIDGE, THROUGH  
THE WEALD OF KENT AND OVER THE HILLS  
BY WESTERHAM AND HAYS, TO THE WEN

DOVER,

*Wednesday, 3 Sept. 1823 (Evening).*

ON Monday I was balancing in my own mind whether I should go to France or not. To-day I have decided the question in the negative, and shall set off this evening for the Isle of Thanet ; that spot so famous for corn.

I broke off without giving an account of the country between Folkestone and Dover, which is a very interesting one in itself, and was peculiarly interesting to me on many accounts. I have often mentioned, in describing the parts of the country over which I have travelled ; I have often mentioned the *chalk-ridge* and also the *sand-ridge*, which I had traced, running parallel with each other, from about Farnham, in Surrey, to Sevenoaks, in Kent. The reader must remember how particular I have been to observe that, in going up from Chilworth and Albury, through Dorking, Reigate, Godstone, and so on,

the two chains, or ridges, approach so near to each other, that, in many places, you actually have a chalk-bank to your right and a sand-bank to your left, at not more than forty yards from each other. In some places, these chains of hills run off from each other to a great distance, even to a distance of twenty miles. They then approach again towards each other, and so they go on. I was always desirous to ascertain whether these chains, or ridges, continued on thus *to the sea*. I have now found that they do. And if you go out into the channel, at Folkestone, there you see a sand cliff and a chalk cliff. Folkestone stands upon the sand, in a little dell about seven hundred or eight hundred yards from the very termination of the ridge. All the way along, the chalk ridge is the most lofty, until you come to Leith Hill and Hindhead; and here, at Folkestone, the sand-ridge tapers off in a sort of flat towards the sea. The land is like what it is at Reigate, a very steep hill; a hill of full a mile high, and bending exactly in the same manner as the hill at Reigate does. The turnpike-road winds up it and goes over it in exactly the same manner as that at Reigate. The land to the south of the hill begins a poor, thin, white loam upon the chalk; soon gets to be a very fine rich loam upon the chalk; goes on till it mingles the chalky loam with the sandy loam; and thus it goes on down to the sea-beach, or to the edge of the cliff. It is a beautiful bed of earth here, resembling in extent that on the south side of Portsdown Hill rather than that of Reigate. The crops here are always good if they are good anywhere. A large part of this fine tract of land, as well as the little town of Sandgate (which is a beautiful little place upon the beach itself),



and also great part of the town of Folkestone belong, they tell me, to Lord Radnor, who takes his title of viscount from Folkestone. Upon the hill begins, and continues on for some miles, that stiff red loam, approaching to a clay, which I have several times described as forming the soil at the top of this chalk-ridge. I spoke of it in the *Register* of the 16th of August last, page 409, and I then said it was like the land on the top of this very ridge at Ashmansworth in the north of Hampshire. At Reigate you find precisely the same soil upon the top of the hill, a very red, clayey sort of loam, with big yellow flint stones in it. Everywhere, the soil is the same upon the top of the high part of this ridge. I have now found it to be the same, on the edge of the sea, that I found it on the north-east corner of Hampshire.

From the hill, you keep descending all the way to Dover, a distance of about six miles, and it is absolutely six miles of down hill. On your right, you have the lofty land which forms a series of chalk cliffs, from the top of which you look into the sea; on your left, you have ground that goes rising up from you in the same sort of way. The turnpike-road goes down the middle of a valley, each side of which, as far as you can see, may be about a mile and a half. It is six miles long, you will remember; and here, therefore, with very little interruption, very few chasms, there are *eighteen square miles of corn*. It is a patch such as you very seldom see, and especially of corn so good as it is here. I should think that the wheat all along here would average pretty nearly four quarters to the acre. A few oats are sown. A great deal of barley, and that a very fine crop.

The town of Dover is like other sea-port towns; but



really much more clean, and with less blackguard people in it than I ever observed in any sea-port before. It is a most picturesque place, to be sure. On one side of it rises, upon the top of a very steep hill, the Old Castle, with all its fortifications. On the other side of it there is another chalk hill, the side of which is pretty nearly perpendicular, and rises up from sixty to a hundred feet higher than the tops of the houses, which stand pretty nearly close to the foot of the hill.

I got into Dover rather late. It was dusk when I was going down the street towards the quay. I happened to look up, and was quite astonished to perceive cows grazing upon a spot apparently fifty feet above the tops of the houses, and measuring horizontally not, perhaps, more than ten or twenty feet from a line which would have formed a continuation into the air. I went up to the same spot, the next day, myself; and you actually look down upon the houses, as you look out of a window upon people in the street. The valley that runs down from Folkestone is, when it gets to Dover, crossed by another valley that runs down from Canterbury, or, at least, from the Canterbury direction. It is in the gorge of this cross valley that Dover is built. The two chalk hills jut out into the sea, and the water that comes up between them forms a harbour for this ancient, most interesting, and beautiful place. On the hill to the north stands the castle of Dover, which is fortified in the ancient manner, except on the sea side, where it has the steep *Cliff* for a fortification. On the south side of the town the hill is, I believe, rather more lofty than that on the north side; and here is that cliff which is described by Shakespeare in the play of *King Lear*. It is fearfully

steep, certainly. Very nearly perpendicular for a considerable distance. The grass grows well, to the very tip of the cliff ; and you see cows and sheep grazing there with as much unconcern as if grazing in the bottom of a valley.

It was not, however, these natural curiosities that took me over *this* hill ; I went to see, with my own eyes, something of the sort of means that had been made use of to squander away countless millions of money. Here is a hill containing, probably, a couple of square miles or more, hollowed like a honeycomb. Here are line upon line, trench upon trench, cavern upon cavern, bomb-proof upon bomb-proof ; in short the very sight of the thing convinces you that either madness the most humiliating, or profligacy the most scandalous must have been at work here for years. The question that every man of sense asks is : What reason had you to suppose that the *French would ever come to this hill* to attack it, while the rest of the country was so much more easy to assail ? However, let any man of good plain understanding go and look at the works that have here been performed and that are now all tumbling into ruin. Let him ask what this cavern was for ; what that ditch was for ; what this tank was for ; and why all these horrible holes and hiding-places at an expense of millions upon millions ? Let this scene be brought and placed under the eyes of the people of England, and let them be told that Pitt and Dundas and Perceval had these things done to prevent the country from being conquered ; with voice unanimous the nation would instantly exclaim : Let the French or let the devil take us, rather than let us resort to means of defence like these. This is, perhaps, the only set of fortifications in the world ever framed for mere *hiding*.



There is no appearance of any intention to annoy an enemy. It is a parcel of holes made in a hill, to hide Englishmen from Frenchmen. Just as if the Frenchmen would come to this hill ! Just as if they would not go (if they came at all) and land in Romney Marsh, or on Pevensey Level, or anywhere else, rather than come to this hill ; rather than come to crawl up Shakespeare's Cliff. All the way along the coast, from this very hill to Portsmouth ; or pretty nearly all the way, is a flat. What the devil should they come to this hill for, then ? And when you ask this question, they tell you that it is to have an army here *behind* the French, after they had marched into the country ! And for a purpose like this ; for a purpose so stupid, so senseless, so mad as this, and withal, so scandalously disgraceful, more brick and stone have been buried in this hill than would go to build a neat new cottage for every labouring man in the counties of Kent and of Sussex.

Dreadful is the scourge of such ministers. However, those who supported them will now have to suffer. The money must have been squandered purposely, and for the worst ends. Fool as Pitt was ; unfit as an old hack of a lawyer, like Dundas, was to judge of the means of defending the country, stupid as both these fellows were, and as their brother lawyer, Perceval, was too : unfit as these lawyers were to judge in any such a case, they must have known that this was an useless expenditure of money. They must have known that ; and, therefore, their general folly, their general ignorance, is no apology for their conduct. What they wanted was to prevent the landing, not of Frenchmen, but of French principles ; that is to say, to prevent the example of the French from



being alluring to the people of England. The devil a bit did they care for the Bourbons. They rejoiced at the killing of the king. They rejoiced at the atheistical decree. They rejoiced at everything calculated to alarm the timid and to excite horror in the people of England in general. They wanted to keep out of England those principles which had a natural tendency to destroy boroughmongering, and to put an end to speculation and plunder. No matter whether by the means of martello towers, making a great chalk hill a honeycomb, cutting a canal thirty feet wide to stop the march of the armies of the Danube and the Rhine: no matter how they squandered the money, so that it silenced some and made others bawl to answer their great purpose of preventing French example from having an influence in England. Simply their object was this: to make the French people miserable; to force back the Bourbons upon them as a *means* of making them miserable; to degrade France, to make the people wretched; and then to have to say to the people of England, Look there: *see what they have got by their attempts to obtain liberty!* This was their object. They did not want martello towers and honeycombed chalk hills and mad canals: they did not want these to keep out the French armies. The boroughmongers and the parsons cared nothing about the French armies. It was the French example that the lawyers, boroughmongers, and parsons wished to keep out. And what have they done? It is impossible to be upon this honeycombed hill, upon this enormous mass of anti-Jacobin expenditure, without seeing the chalk cliffs of Calais and the cornfields of France. At this season it is impossible to see those fields without knowing that the

farmers are getting in their corn there as well as here ; and it is impossible to think of that fact without reflecting, at the same time, on the example which the farmers of France hold out to the farmers of England. Looking down from this very anti-Jacobin hill, this day, I saw the parsons' shocks of wheat and barley, left in the field after the farmer had taken his away. Turning my head, and looking across the Channel, " There," said I, pointing to France, " there the spirited and sensible people have ridded themselves of this burden, of which our farmers so bitterly complain." It is impossible not to recollect here, that, in numerous petitions, sent up, too, by the *loyal*, complaints have been made that the English farmer has to carry on a competition against the French farmer who has *no tithes to pay* ! Well, *loyal gentlemen*, why do not you petition, then, to be relieved from tithes ? What do you mean else ? Do you mean to call upon our big gentlemen at Whitehall for them to compel the French to pay tithes ? Oh, you loyal fools ! Better hold your tongues about the French not paying tithes. Better do that, at any rate, for never will they pay tithes again.

Here is a large tract of *land* upon these hills at Dover, which is the property of the public, having been purchased at an enormous expense. This is now let out as pasture land to people of the town. I dare say that the letting of this land is a curious affair. If there were a member for Dover who would do what he ought to do, he would soon get before the public a list of the tenants, and of the rents paid by them. I should like very much to see such list. Butterworth, the bookseller in Fleet Street, he who is a sort of metropolitan of the Methodists, is one of the members for Dover. The other is, I believe, that



Wilbraham or Bootle or Bootle Wilbraham, or some such name, that is a Lancashire magistrate. So that Dover is prettily set up. However, there is nothing of this sort that can, in the present state of things, be deemed to be of any real consequence. As long as the people at Whitehall can go on paying the interest of the debt in full, so long will there be no change worth the attention of any rational man. In the meantime the French nation will be going on rising over us; and our ministers will be cringing and crawling to every nation upon earth who is known to possess a cannon or a barrel of powder.

This very day I have read Mr. Canning's speech at Liverpool, with a Yankee consul sitting on his right hand. Not a word now about the bits of bunting and the fir frigates; but now, America is the lovely daughter, who in a moment of excessive love has gone off with a lover (to wit, the French) and left the tender mother to mourn! What a fop! And this is the man that talked so big and so bold. This is the clever, the profound, the blustering, too, and above all things, "the high spirited" Mr. Canning. However, more of this hereafter. I must get from this Dover, as fast as I can.

SANDWICH,

*Wednesday, 3 Sept., Night.*

I got to this place about half an hour after the ringing of the eight o'clock bell, or curfew, which I heard about two miles distance from the place. From the town of Dover you come up the Castle Hill, and have a most beautiful view from the top of it. You have the sea, the chalk cliffs of Calais, the high land at Boulogne, the town of Dover just under you, the valley towards Folkestone,



and the much more beautiful valley towards Canterbury ; and going on a little further, you have the Downs and the Essex or Suffolk coast in full view, with a most beautiful corn country to ride along through. The corn was chiefly cut between Dover and Walmer. The barley almost all cut and tied up in sheaf. Nothing but the beans seemed to remain standing along here. They are not quite so good as the rest of the corn ; but they are by no means bad. When I came to the village of Walmer, I inquired for the castle ; that famous place, where Pitt, Dundas, Perceval, and all the whole tribe of plotters against the French Revolution had carried on their plots. After coming through the village of Walmer, you see the entrance of the castle away to the right. It is situated pretty nearly on the water's edge, and at the bottom of a little dell, about a furlong or so from the turnpike-road. This is now the habitation of our great minister, Robert Banks Jenkinson, son of Charles of that name. When I was told, by a girl who was leasing in a field by the road side, that that was Walmer Castle, I stopped short, pulled my horse round, looked steadfastly at the gateway, and could not help exclaiming : " Oh, thou who inhabitest that famous dwelling ; thou, who hast always been in place, let who might be out of place ! Oh, thou everlasting placeman ! thou sage of ' over-production,' do but cast thine eyes upon this barley field, where, if I am not greatly deceived, there are from seven to eight quarters upon the acre ! Oh, thou whose *Courier* newspaper has just informed its readers that wheat will be seventy shillings the quarter in the month of November : oh, thou wise man, I pray thee come forth from thy castle, and tell me what thou wilt do if wheat should

happen to be, at the appointed time, thirty-five shillings, instead of seventy shillings, the quarter. Sage of over-production, farewell. If thou hast life, thou wilt be minister as long as thou canst pay the interest of the debt in full, but not one minute longer. The moment thou ceasest to be able to squeeze from the Normans a sufficiency to count down to the Jews their full tale, that moment, thou great stern-path-of-duty man, thou wilt begin to be taught the true meaning of the words *Ministerial Responsibility*."

Deal is a most villainous place. It is full of filthy-looking people. Great desolation of abomination has been going on here ; tremendous barracks, partly pulled down and partly tumbling down, and partly occupied by soldiers. Everything seems upon the perish. I was glad to hurry along through it, and to leave its inns and public-houses to be occupied by the tarred, and trowsered, and blue-and-buff crew whose very vicinage I always detest. From Deal you come along to Upper Deal, which, it seems, was the original village ; thence upon a beautiful road to Sandwich, which is a rotten borough. Rottenness, putridity is excellent for land, but bad for boroughs. This place, which is as villainous a hole as one would wish to see, is surrounded by some of the finest land in the world. Along on one side of it lies a marsh. On the other sides of it is land which they tell me bears *seven quarters* of wheat to an acre. It is certainly very fine ; for I saw large pieces of radish-seed on the roadside ; this seed is grown for the seedsmen in London ; and it will grow on none but rich land. All the corn is carried here except some beans and some barley.



CANTERBURY,

*Thursday Afternoon, 4 Sept.*

In quitting Sandwich, you immediately cross a river up which vessels bring coals from the sea. This marsh is about a couple of miles wide. It begins at the sea-beach, opposite the Downs, to my right hand, coming from Sandwich, and it wheels round to my left and ends at the sea-beach, opposite Margate roads. This marsh was formerly covered with the sea, very likely; and hence the land within this sort of semicircle, the name of which is Thanet, was called an *Isle*. It is, in fact, an island now, for the same reason that Portsea is an island, and that New York is an island; for there certainly is the water in this river that goes round and connects one part of the sea with the other. I had to cross this river, and to cross the marsh, before I got into the famous Isle of Thanet, which it was my intention to cross. Soon after crossing the river, I passed by a place for making salt, and could not help recollecting that there are no excisemen in these salt-making places in France, that, before the Revolution, the French were most cruelly oppressed by the duties on salt, that they had to endure, on that account, the most horrid tyranny that ever was known, except, perhaps, that practised in an *Exchequer* that shall here be nameless; that thousands and thousands of men and women were every year sent to the galleys for what was called smuggling salt; that the fathers and even the mothers were imprisoned or whipped if the children were detected in smuggling salt: I could not help reflecting, with delight, as I looked at these salt-pans in the Isle of Thanet; I could not help reflecting, that in spite of Pitt,



Dundas, Perceval, and the rest of the crew, in spite of the caverns of Dover and the martello towers in Romney Marsh : in spite of all the spies and all the bayonets, and the six hundred millions of debt and the hundred and fifty millions of dead-weight, and the two hundred millions of poor-rates that are now squeezing the borough-mongers, squeezing the farmers, puzzling the fellows at Whitehall and making Mark Lane a scene of greater interest than the Chamber of the Privy Council ; with delight as I jogged along under the first beams of the sun, I reflected that, in spite of all the malignant measures that had brought so much misery upon England, the gallant French people had ridded themselves of the tyranny which sent them to the galleys for endeavouring to use without tax the salt which God sent upon their shores. Can any man tell why we should still be paying five, or six, or seven shillings a bushel for salt, instead of one ? We did pay fifteen shillings a bushel, tax. And why is two shillings a bushel kept on ; Because, if they were taken off, the salt-tax-gathering crew must be discharged ! This tax of two shillings a bushel causes the consumer to pay five, at the least, more than he would if there were no tax at all ! When, great God ! when shall we be allowed to enjoy God's gifts, in freedom, as the people of France enjoy them ?

On the marsh I found the same sort of sheep as on Romney Marsh ; but the cattle here are chiefly Welsh ; black, and called runts. They are nice hardy cattle ; and, I am told, that this is the description of cattle that they fat all the way up on this north side of Kent.—When I got upon the corn land in the Isle of Thanet, I got into a garden indeed. There is hardly any fallow ;

comparatively few turnips. It is a country of corn. Most of the harvest is in ; but there are some fields of wheat and of barley not yet housed. A great many pieces of lucerne, and all of them very fine. I left Ramsgate to my right about three miles, and went right across the island to Margate ; but that place is so thickly settled with stock-jobbing cuckolds, at this time of the year, that, having no fancy to get their horns stuck into me, I turned away to my left when I got within about half a mile of the town. I got to a little hamlet, where I breakfasted ; but could get no corn for my horse, and no bacon for myself ! All was corn around me. Barns, I should think, two hundred feet long ; ricks of enormous size and most numerous ; crops of wheat, five quarters to an acre, on the average ; and a public-house without either bacon or corn ! The labourers' houses, all along through this island, beggarly in the extreme. The people dirty, poor-looking ; ragged, but particularly *dirty*. The men and boys with dirty faces, and dirty smock-frocks, and dirty shirts ; and, good God ! what a difference between the wife of a labouring man here, and the wife of a labouring man in the forests and woodlands of Hampshire and Sussex ! Invariably have I observed that the richer the soil, and the more destitute of woods ; that is to say, the more purely a corn country, the more miserable the labourers. The cause is this, the great, the big bull frog grasps all. In this beautiful island every inch of land is appropriated by the rich. No hedges, no ditches, no commons, no grassy lanes : a country divided into great farms ; a few trees surround the great farm-house. All the rest is bare of trees ; and the wretched labourer has not a stick of wood, and has



no place for a pig or cow to graze, or even to lie down upon. The rabbit countries are the countries for labouring men. There the ground is not so valuable. There it is not so easily appropriated by the few. Here, in this island, the work is almost all done by the horses. The horses plough the ground ; they sow the ground ; they hoe the ground ; they carry the corn home ; they thresh it out ; and they carry it to market : nay, in this island, they *rake* the ground ; they rake up the straggling straws and ears ; so that they do the whole, except the reaping and the mowing. It is impossible to have an idea of anything more miserable than the state of the labourers in this part of the country.

After coming by Margate, I passed a village called Monckton, and another called Sarr. At Sarr there is a bridge, over which you come out of the island, as you go into it over the bridge at Sandwich. At Monckton they had *seventeen men working on the roads*, though the harvest was not quite in, and though, of course, it had all to be threshed out ; but, at Monckton, they had *four threshing machines* ; and they have three threshing machines at Sarr, though there, also, they have several men upon the roads ! This is a shocking state of things ; and in spite of everything that the Jenkinsons and the Scots can do, this state of things must be changed.

At Sarr, or a little way further back, I saw a man who had just begun to reap a field of canary seed. The plants were too far advanced to be cut in order to be bleached for the making of plat ; but I got the reaper to select me a few green stalks that grew near a bush that stood on the outside of the piece. These I have brought on with me, in order to give them a trial. At Sarr I began to cross



the marsh, and had, after this, to come through the village of Up-street, and another village called Steady, before I got to Canterbury. At Up-street I was struck with the words written upon a board which was fastened upon a pole, which pole was standing in a garden near a neat little box of a house. The words were these. "PARADISE PLACE. *Spring guns and steel traps are set here.*" A pretty idea it must give us of Paradise to know that spring guns and steel traps are set in it! This is doubtless some stock-jobber's place; for, in the first place, the name is likely to have been selected by one of that crew; and, in the next place, whenever any of them go to the country, they look upon it that they are to begin a sort of warfare against everything around them. They invariably look upon every labourer as a thief.

As you approach Canterbury, from the Isle of Thanet, you have another instance of the squanderings of the lawyer ministers. Nothing equals the ditches, the caverns, the holes, the tanks, and hiding-places of the hill at Dover; but, considerable as the city of Canterbury is, that city, within its gates, stands upon less ground than those horrible erections, the barracks of Pitt, Dundas, and Perceval. They are perfectly enormous; but thanks be unto God, they begin to crumble down. They have a sickly hue: all is lassitude about them: endless are their lawns, their gravel walks, and their ornaments; but their lawns are unshaven, their gravel walks grassy, and their ornaments putting on the garments of ugliness. You see the grass growing opposite the doorways. A hole in the window strikes you here and there. Lamp posts there are, but no lamps. Here are horse-barracks,

foot-barracks, artillery-barracks, engineer-barracks : a whole country of barracks ; but only here and there a soldier. The thing is actually perishing. It is typical of the state of the great Thing of things. It gave me inexpressible pleasure to perceive the gloom that seemed to hang over these barracks, which once swarmed with soldiers and their blithe companions, as a hive swarms with bees. These barracks now look like the environs of a hive in winter. Westminster Abbey Church is not the place for the monument of Pitt ; the statue of the great snorting bawler ought to be stuck up here, just in the midst of this hundred or two of acres covered with barracks. These barracks, too, were erected in order to compel the French to return to the payment of tithes ; in order to bring their necks again under the yoke of the lords and the clergy. That has not been accomplished. The French, as Mr. Hoggart assures us, have neither tithes, taxes, nor rates ; and the people of Canterbury know that they have a *hop-duty* to pay, while Mr. Hoggart, of Broad Street, tells them that he has farms to let, in France, where there are hop-gardens and where there is no hop-duty. They have lately had races at Canterbury ; and the mayor and aldermen, in order to get the Prince Leopold to attend them, presented him with the Freedom of the City ; but it rained all the time and he did not come ! The mayor and aldermen do not understand things half so well as this German gentleman, who has managed his matters as well, I think, as any one that I ever heard of.

This fine old town, or rather city, is remarkable for cleanliness and niceness, notwithstanding it has a cathedral in it. The country round it is very rich, and this



year, while the hops are so bad in most other parts, they are not so very bad just about Canterbury.

ELVERTON FARM, NEAR FAVERSHAM,  
*Friday Morning, 5 Sept.*

In going through Canterbury, yesterday, I gave a boy sixpence to hold my horse, while I went into the cathedral, just to thank St. Swithin for the trick that he had played my friends, the Quakers. Led along by the wet weather till after the harvest had actually begun, and then to find the weather turn fine, all of a sudden ! This must have soused them pretty decently ; and I hear of one, who, at Canterbury, has made a bargain by which he will certainly lose two thousand pounds. The land where I am now is equal to that of the Isle of Thanet. The harvest is nearly over, and all the crops have been prodigiously fine. In coming from Canterbury, you come to the top of a hill, called Baughton Hill, at four miles from Canterbury on the London Road ; and you there look down into one of the finest flats in England. A piece of marsh comes up nearly to Faversham ; and at the edge of that marsh lies the farm where I now am. The land here is a deep loam upon chalk ; and this is also the nature of the land in the Isle of Thanet and all the way from that to Dover. The orchards grow well upon this soil. The trees grow finely, the fruit is large and of fine flavour.

In 1821 I gave Mr. William Waller, who lives here, some American apple-cuttings ; and he has now some as fine Newton Pippins as one would wish to see. They are very large of their sort ; very free in their growth ; and they promise to be very fine apples of the kind. Mr. Waller



had cuttings from me of several sorts, in 1822. These were cut down last year; they have, of course, made shoots this summer; and great numbers of these shoots have fruit-spurs, which will have blossom, if not fruit next year. This very rarely happens, I believe; and the state of Mr. Waller's trees clearly proves to me that the introduction of these American trees would be a great improvement.

My American apples, when I left Kensington, promised to be very fine; and the apples, which I have frequently mentioned as being upon cuttings imported last spring, promised to come to perfection; a thing which, I believe, we have not an instance of before.

MERRYWORTH,

*Friday Evening, 5 Sept.*

A friend at Tenterden told me that, if I had a mind to know Kent, I must go through Romney Marsh to Dover, from Dover to Sandwich, from Sandwich to Margate, from Margate to Canterbury, from Canterbury to Faversham, from Faversham to Maidstone, and from Maidstone to Tonbridge. I found from Mr. Waller, this morning, that the regular turnpike route, from his house to Maidstone, was through Sittingbourne. I had been along that road several times; and besides, to be covered with dust was what I could not think of, when I had it in my power to get to Maidstone without it. I took the road across the country, quitting the London road, or rather, crossing it, in the dell, between Ospringe and Green Street. I instantly began to go up hill, slowly, indeed; but up hill. I came through the villages of Newnham, Doddington, Ringlestone, and to that of Hollingbourne.

I had come up hill for thirteen miles, from Mr. Waller's house. At last, I got to the top of this hill, and went along, for some distance, upon level ground. I found I was got upon just the same sort of land as that on the hill at Folkestone, at Reigate, at Ropley, and at Ashmansworth. The red clayey loam, mixed up with great yellow flint stones. I found fine meadows here, just such as are at Ashmansworth (that is to say, on the north Hampshire hills). This sort of ground is characterised by an astonishing depth that they have to go for the water. At Ashmansworth, they go to a depth of more than three hundred feet. As I was riding along upon the top of this hill in Kent I saw the same beautiful sort of meadows that there are at Ashmansworth; I saw the corn backward; I was just thinking to go up to some house, to ask how far they had to go for water, when I saw a large well-bucket, and all the chains and wheels belonging to such a concern; but here was also the tackle for a *horse* to work in drawing up the water! I asked about the depth of the well; and the information I received must have been incorrect; because I was told it was three hundred yards. I asked this of a public-house keeper further on, not seeing anybody where the farm-house was. I make no doubt that the depth is, as near as possible, that of Ashmansworth. Upon the top of this hill, I saw the finest field of beans that I have seen this year, and, by very far, indeed, the *finest piece of hops*. A beautiful piece of hops, surrounded by beautiful plantations of young ash, producing poles for hop-gardens. My road here pointed towards the west. It soon wheeled round towards the south; and, all of a sudden, I found myself upon the edge of a hill, as lofty



and as steep as that at Folkestone, at Reigate, or at Ashmansworth. It was the same famous chalk ridge that I was crossing again. When I got to the edge of the hill, and before I got off my horse to lead him down this more than mile of a hill, I sat and surveyed the prospect before me, and to the right and to the left. This is what the people of Kent call the *Garden of Eden*. It is a district of meadows, corn fields, hop-gardens, and orchards of apples, pears, cherries and filberts, with very little if any land which cannot, with propriety, be called good. There are plantations of chestnut and of ash frequently occurring; and as these are cut when long enough to make poles for hops, they are at all times objects of great beauty.

At the foot of the hill of which I have been speaking is the village of Hollingbourne; thence you come on to Maidstone. From Maidstone to this place (Merryworth) is about seven miles, and these are the finest seven miles that I have ever seen in England or anywhere else. The Medway is to your left, with its meadows about a mile wide. You cross the Medway, in coming out of Maidstone, and it goes and finds its way down to Rochester, through a break in the chalk ridge. From Maidstone to Merryworth, I should think that there were hop-gardens on one half of the way on both sides of the road. Then looking across the Medway, you see hop-gardens and orchards two miles deep, on the side of a gently-rising ground: and this continues with you all the way from Maidstone to Merryworth. The orchards form a great feature of the country; and the plantations of ashes and of chestnuts that I mentioned before, add greatly to the beauty. These gardens of hops are kept



very clean, in general, though some of them have been neglected this year owing to the bad appearance of the crop. The culture is sometimes mixed: that is to say, apple-trees or cherry-trees or filbert-trees and hops, in the same ground. This is a good way, they say, of raising an orchard. I do not believe it; and I think that nothing is gained by any of these mixtures. They plant apple-trees or cherry-trees in rows here; they then plant a filbert-tree close to each of these large fruit-trees; and then they cultivate the middle of the ground by planting potatoes. This is being too greedy. It is impossible that they can gain by this. What they gain one way they lose the other way; and I verily believe that the most profitable way would be never to mix things at all. In coming from Maidstone I passed through a village called Teston, where Lord Basham has a seat.

TONBRIDGE,

*Saturday Morning, 6 Sept.*

I came off from Merryworth a little before five o'clock, passed the seat of Lord Torrington, the friend of Mr. Barretto. This Mr. Barretto ought not to be forgotten so soon. In 1820 he sued for articles of the peace against Lord Torrington, for having menaced him, in consequence of his having pressed his lordship about some money. It seems that Lord Torrington had known him in the East Indies; that they came home together, or soon after one another; that his lordship invited Mr. Barretto to his best parties in India; that he got him introduced at court in England by Sidmouth; that he got him made a *Fellow of the Royal Society*; and that he tried to get

him introduced into Parliament. His lordship, when Barretto rudely pressed him for his money, reminded him of all this, and of the many difficulties that he had had to overcome with regard to his *colour* and so forth. Nevertheless, the dingy skinned court visitant pressed in such a way that Lord Torrington was obliged to be pretty smart with him, whereupon the other sued for articles of the peace against his lordship ; but these were not granted by the court. This Barretto issued a hand-bill at the last election as a candidate for St. Albans. I am truly sorry that he was not elected. Lord Camelford threatened to put in his black fellow ; but he was a sad swaggering fellow ; and had, at last, too much of the boroughmonger in him to do a thing so meritorious. Lord Torrington's is but an indifferent looking place.

I here began to see South Down sheep again, which I had not seen since the time I left Tenterden. All along here the villages are not more than two miles distance from each other. They have all large churches, and scarcely anybody to go to them. At a village called Hadlow, there is a house belonging to a Mr. May, the most singular looking thing I ever saw. An immense house stuck all over with a parcel of chimneys, or things like chimneys ; little brick columns, with a sort of caps on them, looking like carnation sticks, with caps at the top to catch the earwigs. The building is all of brick, and has the oddest appearance of anything I ever saw. This Tonbridge is but a common country town, though very clean, and the people looking very well. The climate must be pretty warm here, for in entering the town I saw a large *Althea Frutex* in bloom, a thing rare enough, any year, and particularly a year like this.



WESTERHAM,

*Saturday, Noon, 6 Sept.*

Instead of going on to the Wen along the turnpike-road through Sevenoaks, I turned to my left when I got about a mile out of Tonbridge, in order to come along that tract of country called the Weald of Kent ; that is to say, the solid clays, which have no bottom, which are unmixed with chalk, sand, stone, or anything else ; the country of dirty roads and of oak trees. I stopped at Tonbridge only a few minutes ; but in the Weald I stopped to breakfast at a place called Leigh. From Leigh I came to Chittingstone causeway, leaving Tonbridge Wells six miles over the hills to my left. From Chittingstone I came to Bough-beach, thence to Four Elms, and thence to this little market-town of Westerham, which is just upon the border of Kent. Indeed, Kent, Surrey, and Sussex form a joining very near to this town. Westerham, exactly like Reigate and Godstone, and Sevenoaks, and Dorking, and Folkestone, lies between the sand-ridge and the chalk-ridge. The valley is here a little wider than at Reigate, and that is all the difference there is between the places. As soon as you get over the sand hill to the south of Reigate, you get into the Weald of Surrey ; and here, as soon as you get over the sand hill to the south of Westerham, you get into the Weald of Kent.

I have now, in order to get to the Wen, to cross the chalk-ridge once more, and at a point where I never crossed it before. Coming through the Weald I found the corn very good ; and low as the ground is, wet as it is, cold as it is, there will be very little of the wheat



which will not be housed before Saturday night. All the corn is good, and the barley excellent. Not far from Bough-beach, I saw two oak-trees, one of which was, they told me, more than thirty feet round, and the other more than twenty-seven ; but they have been hollow for half a century. They are not much bigger than the oak upon Tilford Green, if any. I mean in the trunk ; but they are hollow, while that tree is sound in all its parts, and growing still. I have had a most beautiful ride through the Weald. The day is very hot ; but I have been in the shade ; and my horse's feet very often in the rivulets and wet lanes. In one place I rode above a mile completely arched over by the boughs of the under-wood, growing in the banks of the lane. What an odd taste that man must have who prefers a turnpike-road to a lane like this.

Very near to Westerham there are hops : and I have seen now and then a little bit of hop garden, even in the Weald. Hops will grow well where lucerne will grow well ; and lucerne will grow well where there is a rich top and a dry bottom. When therefore you see hops in the Weald, it is on the side of some hill, where there is sand or stone at bottom, and not where there is real clay beneath. There appear to be hops, here and there, all along from nearly at Dover to Alton, in Hampshire. You find them all along Kent ; you find them at Westerham ; across at Worth, in Sussex ; at Godstone, in Surrey ; over to the north of Merrow Down, near Guildford ; at Godalming ; under the Hog's-back, at Farnham ; and all along that way to Alton. But there, I think, they end. The whole face of the country seems to rise, when you get just beyond Alton, and to keep up.

Whether you look to the north, the south, or west, the land seems to rise, and the hops cease, till you come again away to the north-west, in Herefordshire.

KENSINGTON,  
*Saturday Night, 6 Sept.*

Here I close my day, at the end of forty-four miles. In coming up the chalk hill from Westerham, I prepared myself for the stiff red clay-like loam, the big yellow flints and the meadows ; and I found them all. I have now gone over this chalk-ridge in the following places : at Coombe in the north-west of Hampshire ; I mean the north-west corner, the very extremity of the county. I have gone over it at Ashmansworth, or Highclere, going from Newbury to Andover ; at King's Clere, going from Newbury to Winchester ; at Ropley, going from Alresford to Selborne ; at Dippinghall, going from Crondall to Thursly ; at Merrow, going from Chertsey to Chilworth ; at Reigate ; at Westerham, and then, between these, at Godstone ; at Sevenoaks, going from London to Battle ; at Hollingbourne, as mentioned above, and at Folkestone. In all these places I have crossed this chalk-ridge. Everywhere, upon the top of it, I have found a flat, and the soil of all these flats I have found to be a red stiff loam mingled up with big yellow flints. A soil difficult to work ; but by no means bad, whether for wood, hops, grass, orchards or corn. I once before mentioned that I was assured that the pasture upon these bleak hills was as rich as that which is found in the north of Wiltshire, in the neighbourhood of Swindon, where they make some of the best cheese in the kingdom. Upon these hills I have never found the labouring people

poor and miserable, as in the rich vales. All is not appropriated where there are coppices and wood, where the cultivation is not so easy and the produce so very large.

After getting up the hill from Westerham, I had a general descent to perform all the way to the Thames. When you get to Beckenham, which is the last parish in Kent, the country begins to assume a cockney-like appearance ; all is artificial, and you no longer feel any interest in it.

## FROM BURGHCLERE TO LYNDHURST, IN THE NEW FOREST

HURSTBOURN TARRANT.

OBSERVATIONS UPON GAME LAWS, BEING PART OF ' A  
LETTER TO LANDLORDS,' ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN  
THE ' REGISTER.'

THIS is the last Letter that I shall ever take the trouble to address to you (Landlords). In a short time, you will become much too insignificant to merit any particular notice ; but just in the way of *farewell*, and that there may be something on record to show what care has been taken of the partridges, pheasants, and hares, while the estates themselves have been suffered to slide away, I have resolved to address this one more Letter to you, which resolution has been occasioned by the recent *putting to death*, at Winchester, of two men denominated *Poachers*. This is a thing which, whatever you may think of it, has not been passed over, and is not to be



passed over, without full notice and ample record. The account of the matter, as it appeared in the public prints, was very short; but the fact is such as never ought to be forgotten. And while you are complaining of your "distress" I will endeavour to lay before the public that which will show that the *law* has not been unmindful of even your *sports*. The time is approaching when the people will have an opportunity of exercising their judgment as to what are called "game laws;" when they will look back a little at what has been done for the sake of insuring sports to landlords. In short, landlords as well as labourers will *pass under review*. But I must proceed to my subject, reserving reflections for a subsequent part of my letter.

The account to which I have alluded is this :

"HAMPSHIRE. The Lent Assizes for this county concluded on Saturday morning. The Criminal Calendar contained 58 prisoners for trial, 16 of whom have been sentenced to suffer death, but only two of that number (*poachers*) were left by the judges for execution, viz. : James Turner, aged 28, for aiding and assisting in killing Robert Baker, gamekeeper to Thomas Asheton Smith, Esq., in the parish of South Tidworth, and Charles Smith, aged 27, for having wilfully and maliciously shot at Robert Snellgrove, assistant gamekeeper to Lord Palmerston, at Broadlands, in the parish of Romsey, with intent to do him grievous bodily harm. The judge (Burrough) observed, it became *necessary to these cases that the extreme sentence of the law should be inflicted to deter others, as resistance to gamekeepers was now arrived at an alarming height, and many lives had been lost.*"

The first thing to observe here is, that there were

*sixteen* persons sentenced to suffer death ; and that the only persons actually put to death were those who had been endeavouring to get at the hares, pheasants or partridges of Thomas Asheton Smith and of our Secretary at War, Lord Palmerston. Whether the Judge Burrough (who was long chairman of the quarter sessions in Hampshire) uttered the words ascribed to him or not, I cannot say ; but the words have gone forth in print, and the impression they are calculated to make is this : that it was necessary to put these two *men to death* in order to deter others from resisting gamekeepers. The putting of these men to death has excited a very deep feeling throughout the county of Hants ; a feeling very honourable to the people of that county, and very natural to the breast of every human being.

In this case there appears to have been a killing, in which Turner *assisted* ; and Turner might, by possibility, have given the fatal blow, but in the case of Smith, there was no killing at all. There was a mere *shooting at*, with intention to do him bodily harm. This latter offence was not a crime for which men were put to death, even when there was no assault, or attempt at assault, on the part of the person shot at ; this was not a crime punished with death until that terrible act, brought in by the late Lord Ellenborough, was passed, and formed a part of our matchless code, that code which there is such a talk about *softening* ; but which softening does not appear to have in view this act, or any portion of the game laws.

In order to form a just opinion with regard to the offence of these two men that have been hanged at Winchester, we must first consider the motives by which they were actuated in committing the acts of violence



laid to their charge. For it is the intention, and not the mere act, that constitutes the crime. To make an act murder there must be *malice aforethought*. The question, therefore, is, did these men attack, or were they the attacked? It seems to be clear that they were the attacked parties: for they are executed, according to this publication, to deter others from *resisting* gamekeepers!

I know very well that there is law for this; but what I shall endeavour to show is, that the law ought to be altered; that the people of Hampshire ought to petition for such alteration; and that if you, the landlords, were wise, you would petition also for an alteration, if not a total annihilation of that terrible code, called the game laws, which has been growing harder and harder all the time that it ought to have been wearing away. It should never be forgotten that, in order to make punishments efficient in the way of example, they must be thought just by the community at large; and they will never be thought just if they aim at the protection of things belonging to one particular class of the community, and especially if those very things be grudged to this class by the community in general. When punishments of this sort take place, they are looked upon as unnecessary, the sufferers are objects of pity, the common feeling of the community is in their favour instead of being against them; and it is those who cause the punishment, and not those who suffer it, who become objects of abhorrence.

Upon seeing two of our countrymen hanging upon a gallows, we naturally and instantly run back to the cause. First we find the fighting with gamekeepers; next we find that the men would have been transported if caught



in or near a cover with guns after dark ; next we find that these trespassers are exposed to transportation because they are in pursuit, or supposed to be in pursuit, of partridges, pheasants or hares ; and then, we ask, where is the foundation of a law to punish a man with transportation for being in pursuit of these animals ? And where, indeed, is the foundation of the law to take from any man, (be he who he may,) the right of catching and using these animals ? We know very well, we are instructed by mere feeling, that we have a right to live, to see and to move. Common sense tells us that there are some things which no man can reasonably call his property ; and though poachers (as they are called) do not read *Blackstone's Commentaries*, they know that such animals as are of a wild and untameable disposition any man may seize upon and keep for his own use and pleasure. " All these things, so long as they remain in possession, every man has a right to enjoy without disturbance ; but if once they escape from his custody, or he voluntarily abandons the use of them, they return to the common stock, and any man else has an equal right to seize and enjoy them afterwards." (Book 2, chapter 1.)

In the second book and twenty-sixth chapter of *Blackstone*, the poacher might read as follows : " With regard likewise to wild animals, all mankind had by the original grant of the Creator a right to pursue and take away any fowl or insect of the air, any fish or inhabitant of the waters, and any beast or reptile of the field : and this natural right still continues in every individual, unless where it is restrained by the civil laws of the country. And when a man has once so seized them, they become, while living, his qualified property, or, if dead, are abso-

lutely his own : so that to steal them or otherwise invade this property is, according to the respective values, sometimes a criminal offence, sometimes only a civil injury."

Poachers do not read this ; but that reason which is common to all mankind tells them that this is true, and tells them, also, *what to think* of any positive law that is made to restrain them from this right granted by the Creator. Before I proceed further in commenting upon the case immediately before me, let me once more quote this English judge, who wrote fifty years ago, when the game code was mild indeed compared to the one of the present day. " Another violent alteration," says he, " of the English Constitution consisted in the depopulation of whole countries, for the purposes of the king's royal diversion ; and subjecting both them, and all the ancient forests of the kingdom, to the unreasonable severities of forest laws imported from the continent, whereby the slaughter of a beast was made almost as penal as the death of a man. In the Saxon times, though no man was allowed to kill or chase the king's deer, yet he might start any game, pursue and kill it upon his own estate. But the rigour of these new constitutions vested the sole property of all the game in England in the king alone ; and no man was entitled to disturb any fowl of the air, or any beast of the field, of such kinds as were specially reserved for the royal amusement of the sovereign, without express licence from the king, by a grant of a chase or free warren : and those franchises were granted as much with a view to preserve the breed of animals, as to indulge the subject. From a similar principle to which, though the forest laws are now mitigated, and by degrees



grown entirely obsolete, yet from this root has sprung up a bastard slip, known by the name of the game law, now arrived to and wantoning in its highest vigour : both founded upon the same unreasonable notions of permanent property in wild creatures ; and both productive of the same tyranny to the commons : but with this difference ; that the forest laws established only one mighty hunter throughout the land, the game laws have raised a little Nimrod in every manor." (Book 4, chapter 33.)

When this was written nothing was known of the present severity of the law. Judge Blackstone says that the game law was then wantoning in its *highest vigour* ; what, then, would he have said if any one had proposed to make it *felony* to resist a gamekeeper ? He calls it tyranny to the commons, as it existed in his time ; what would he have said of the present code, which, so far from being thought a thing to be *softened*, is never so much as mentioned by those humane and gentle creatures, who are absolutely supporting a sort of reputation, and aiming at distinction in society, in consequence of their incessant talk about softening the criminal code ?

The law may say what it will, but the feelings of mankind will never be in favour of this code ; and whenever it produces putting to death, it will necessarily excite horror. It is impossible to make men believe that any particular set of individuals should have a permanent property in wild creatures. That the owner of land should have a quiet possession of it is reasonable and right and necessary ; it is also necessary that he should have the power of inflicting pecuniary punishment, in a moderate degree, upon such as trespass on his lands ;



but his right can go no further according to reason. If the law give him ample compensation for every damage that he sustains, in consequence of a trespass on his lands, what right has he to complain ?

The law authorises the king, in case of invasion or apprehended invasion, to call upon all his people to take up arms in defence of the country. The militia law compels every man, in his turn, to become a soldier. And upon what ground is this ? There must be some reason for it, or else the law would be tyranny. The reason is, that every man has *rights* in the country to which he belongs ; and that, therefore, it is his duty to defend the country. Some rights, too, beyond that of merely living, merely that of breathing the air. And then, I should be glad to know what rights an Englishman has, if the pursuit of even wild animals is to be the ground of transporting him from his country ? There is a sufficient punishment provided by the law of trespass ; quite sufficient means to keep men off your land altogether ! how can it be necessary, then, to have a law to transport them for coming upon your land ? No, it is not for coming upon the land, it is for coming after the wild animals, which nature and reason tells them are as much theirs as they are yours.

It is impossible for the people not to contrast the treatment of these two men at Winchester with the treatment of some gamekeepers that have killed or maimed the persons they call poachers ; and it is equally impossible for the people, when they see these two men hanging on a gallows, after being recommended to mercy, not to remember the almost instant pardon given to the exciseman, who was not recommended to mercy, and

who was found guilty of wilful murder in the county of Sussex !

It is said, and I believe truly, that there are more persons imprisoned in England for offences against the game laws than there are persons imprisoned in France (with more than twice the population) for all sorts of offences put together. When there was a loud outcry against the cruelties committed on the priests and the seigneurs by the people of France, Arthur Young bade them remember the cruelties committed on the people by the game laws, and to bear in mind how many had been made galley-slaves for having killed, or tried to kill, partridges, pheasants, and hares !

However, I am aware that it is quite useless to address observations of this sort to you. I am quite aware of that ; and yet there are circumstances in your present situation which, one would think, ought to make you *not very gay* upon the hanging of the two men at Winchester. It delights me, I assure you, to see the situation that you are in ; and I shall, therefore, now, once more, and for the last time, address you upon that subject. We all remember how haughty, how insolent, you have been. We all bear in mind your conduct for the last thirty-five years ; and the feeling of pleasure at your present state is as general as it is just. In my *ten Letters* to you, I told you that you would lose your estates. Those of you who have any capacity, except that which is necessary to enable you to kill wild animals, see this now, as clearly as I do ; and yet you evince no intention to change your courses. You hang on with unrelenting grasp ; and cry " pauper " and " poacher " and " radical " and " lower orders " with as much insolence as

ever ! It is always thus ; men like you may be convinced of error, but they never change their conduct. They never become just because they are convinced that they have been unjust : they must have a great deal more than that conviction to make them just.

FROM LYNTHURST (NEW FOREST) TO BEAULIEU ABBEY ; THENCE TO SOUTHAMPTON AND WESTON ; THENCE TO BOTLEY, ALLINGTON, WEST END, NEAR HAMBLEDON ; AND THENCE TO PETERSFIELD, THURSLEY, GODALMING

“ But where is now the goodly audit ale ?  
 The purse-proud tenant, never known to fail ?  
 The farm which never yet was left on hand ?  
 The marsh reclaim'd to most improving land ?  
 The impatient hope of the expiring lease ?  
 The doubling rental ? What an evil's peace !  
 In vain the prize excites the ploughman's skill,  
 In vain the Commons pass their patriot Bill ;  
 The *Landed Interest* —(you may understand  
 The phrase much better leaving out the *Land*)—  
 The land self-interest groans from shore to shore,  
 For fear that plenty should attain the poor.  
 Up, up again, ye rents ! exalt your notes,  
 Or else the ministry will lose their votes,  
 And patriotism, so delicately nice,  
 Her loaves will lower to the market price.”

LORD BYRON, *Age of Bronze*.

WESTON GROVE,  
 Wednesday, 18 Oct. 1826.

YESTERDAY, from Lyndhurst to this place was a ride, including our round-about, of more than forty miles ; but the roads the best in the world, one half of the way



green turf; and the day as fine an one as ever came out of the heavens. We took in a breakfast, calculated for a long day's work, and for no more eating till night. We had slept in a room, the access to which was only through another sleeping room, which was also occupied; and as I had got up about *two o'clock* at Andover, we went to bed, at Lyndhurst, about *half-past seven o'clock*. I was, of course, awake by three or four; I had eaten little over night; so that here lay I, not liking (even after daylight began to glimmer) to go through a chamber, where, by possibility, there might be "a lady" actually *in bed*; here lay I, my bones aching with lying in bed, my stomach growling for victuals, imprisoned by my *modesty*. But at last I grew impatient; for, modesty here or modesty there, I was not to be penned up and starved: so after having shaved and dressed and got ready to go down, I thrust George out a little before me into the other room; and through we pushed, previously resolving, of course, not to look towards *the bed* that was there. But as the devil would have it, just as I was about the middle of the room, I, like Lot's wife, turned my head! All that I shall say is, first, that the consequences that befell her did not befall me, and, second, that I advise those who are likely to be hungry in the morning not to sleep in *inner rooms*; or, if they do, to take some bread and cheese in their pockets. Having got safe down stairs, I lost no time in inquiry after the means of obtaining a breakfast to make up for the bad fare of the previous day; and finding my landlady rather tardy in the work, and not, seemingly, having a proper notion of the affair, I went myself, and having found a butcher's shop, bought a loin of small, fat,

wether mutton, which I saw cut out of the sheep and cut into chops. These were brought to the inn ; George and I ate about 2lb. out of the 5lb. and while I was writing a letter, and making up my packet, to be ready to send from Southampton, George went out and found a poor woman to come and take away the rest of the loin of mutton ; for our *fastings* of the day before enabled us to do this ; and though we had about forty miles to go to get to this place (through the route that we intended to take), I had resolved that we would go without any more *purchase* of victuals and drink this day also. I beg leave to suggest to my *well-fed* readers ; I mean, those who have at their command more victuals and drink than they can possibly swallow ; I beg to suggest to such, whether this would not be a good way for them all to find the means of bestowing charity ? Some poet has said, that that which is given in *charity* gives a blessing on both sides ; to the giver as well as the receiver. But I really think that if *in general* the food and drink given came out of food and drink *deducted* from the usual quantity swallowed by the giver, the *blessing* would be still greater, and much more certain. I can speak for myself, at any rate. I hardly ever eat more than *twice* a day ; when at home, never ; and I never, if I can well avoid it, eat any meat later than about one or two o'clock in the day. I drink a little tea or milk and water at the usual tea-time (about 7 o'clock) ; I go to bed at eight, if I can ; I write or read from about four to about eight, and then hungry as a hunter I go to breakfast, eating *as small a parcel* of cold meat and bread as I can prevail upon my teeth to be satisfied with. I do just the same at dinner time. I very rarely taste *garden-stuff* of any



sort. If any man can show me that he has done, or can do, *more work*, bodily and mentally united; I say nothing about good health, for of that the public can know nothing; but I refer to *the work*: the public know, they see what I can do, and what I actually have done, and what I do; and when any one has shown the public that he has done, or can do, more, then I will advise my readers attend to him on the subject of diet and not to me. As to *drink*, the less the better; and mine is milk and water, or *not-sour* small beer, if I can get the latter; for the former I always can. I like the milk and water best; but I do not like much water; if I drink much milk it loads and stupifies and makes me fat.

Having made all preparations for a day's ride, we set off, as our first point, for a station in the Forest called New Park, there to see something about *plantations* and other matters connected with the affairs of our prime cocks, the surveyors of woods and forests and crown lands and estates. But before I go forward any further, I must just step back again to Rumsey, which we passed rather too hastily through on the 16th, as noticed in the *Ride* that was published last week. This town was, in ancient times, a very grand place, though it is now nothing more than a decent market-town, without anything to entitle it to particular notice, except its church, which was the church of an abbey nunnery (founded more, I think, than a thousand years ago), and which church was the burial place of several of the Saxon kings, and of "Lady Palmerstone," who a few years ago "died in child-birth!" What a mixture! But there was another personage buried here, and who was, it would seem, a native of the place; namely, Sir William Petty, the



ancestor of the present Marquis of Lansdown. He was the son of a *cloth-weaver*, and was, doubtless, himself a weaver when young. He became a surgeon, was first in the service of Charles I., then went into that of Cromwell, whom he served as physician-general to his army in Ireland (alas ! poor Ireland), and in this capacity he resided at Dublin till Charles II. came, when he came over to London (having become very rich), was knighted by that profligate and ungrateful king, and he died in 1687 leaving a fortune of £15,000 a year ! This is what his biographers say. He must have made pretty good use of his time while physician-general to Cromwell's army in poor Ireland ! *Petty* by nature as well as by name, he got from Cromwell a " patent for *double-writing*, invented by him ; " and he invented a " *double-bottomed ship to sail against wind and tide*, a model of which is still preserved in the library of the Royal Society," of which he was a most worthy member. His great art was, however, the amassing of money, and the getting of *grants of lands in poor Ireland*, in which he was one of the most successful of the English adventurers. I had, the other day, occasion to observe that the word *Petty* manifestly is the French word *Petit*, which means little ; and that it is, in these days of degeneracy, pleasing to reflect that there is *one family*, at any rate, that " Old England " still boasts one family, which retains the character designated by its pristine name ; a reflection that rushed with great force into my mind when, in the year 1822, I heard the present noble head of the family say, in the House of Lords, that he thought that a currency of paper, convertible into gold, was the best and most solid and safe, especially since *Platina* had been discovered ! " Oh,

God ! ” exclaimed I to myself, as I stood listening and admiring “ below the bar ; ” “ Oh, great God ! there it is, there it is, still running in the blood, that genius which discovered the art of double-writing, and of making ships with double-bottoms to sail against wind and tide ! ” This noble and profound descendant of Cromwell’s army-physician has now seen that “ paper, convertible into gold,” is not quite so “ solid and safe ” as he thought it was ! He has now seen what a “ late panic ” is ! And he might, if he were not so very well worthy of his family name, openly confess that he was deceived when, in 1819, he as one of the committee who reported in favour of Peel’s bill said that the country could pay the interest of the debt in gold ! Talk of a *change of ministry*, indeed ! What is to be *gained* by putting this man in the place of any of those who are in power now ?

To come back now to Lyndhurst, we had to go about three miles to New Park, which is a *farm* in the New Forest, and nearly in the centre of it. We got to this place about nine o’clock. There is a good and large mansion-house here, in which the “ commissioners ” of woods and forests reside when they come into the forest. There is a garden, a farm-yard, a farm, and a nursery. The place looks like a considerable gentleman’s seat ; the house stands in a sort of *park*, and you can see that a great deal of expense has been incurred in levelling the ground and making it pleasing to the eye of my lords “ the commissioners.” My business here was to see whether anything had been done towards the making of *locust plantations*. I went first to Lyndhurst to make inquiries ; but I was there told that New Park was the place, and the only place, at which to get information on



the subject ; and I was told, further, that the commissioners were now at New Park ; that is to say those experienced tree-planters, Messrs. Arbuthnot, Dawkins, and Company. Gad ! thought I, I am here coming in close contact with a branch, or at least a twig, of the great THING itself ! When I heard this, I was at breakfast, and of course dressed for the day. I could not, out of my extremely limited wardrobe, afford a clean shirt for the occasion ; and so off we set, just as we were, hoping that their worships, the nation's tree-planters, would, if they met with us, excuse our dress, when they considered the nature of our circumstances. When we came to the house, we were stopped by a little fence and fastened gate. I got off my horse, gave him to George to hold, went up to the door, and rang the bell. Having told my business to a person, who appeared to be a foreman or bailiff, he, with great civility, took me into a nursery which is at the back of the house ; and I soon drew from him the disappointing fact that my lords, the tree-planters, had departed the day before ! I found, as to *locusts*, that a patch were sowed last spring, which I saw, which are from one foot to four feet high, and very fine and strong, and are, in number, about enough to plant, two acres of ground, the plants at four feet apart each way. I found that last fall some few locusts had been put out into plantations of other trees already made ; but that they had *not thriven*, and had been *barked* by the hares ! But a little bunch of these trees (same age), which were planted in the nursery, ought to convince my lords, the tree-planters, that if they were to do what they ought to do the public would very soon be owners of fine plantations of locusts for the use of the navy.



And what are the *hares* kept *for* here ? *Who* eats them ? What *right* have these commissioners to keep hares here to eat up the trees ? Lord Folkestone killed his hares before he made his plantation of locusts ; and why not kill the hares in the *people's* forest ; for the *people's* it is, and that these commissioners ought always to remember. And then again, why this farm ? What is it *for* ? Why, the pretence for it is this : that it is necessary to give the deer *hay*, in winter, because the lopping down of limbs of trees for them to *browse* (as used to be the practice) is injurious to the growth of timber. That will be a very good reason for having a *hay-farm* when my lords shall have proved two things ; first, that hay, in quantity equal to what is raised here, could not be bought for a twentieth part of the money that this farm and all its trappings cost ; and, second, that there ought to be any deer kept ! What are these deer *for* ? Who are to *eat* them ? Are they for the royal family ? Why, there are more deer bred in Richmond Park alone to say nothing of Bushy Park, Hyde Park, and Windsor Park ; there are more deer bred in Richmond Park alone than would feed all the branches of the royal family and all their households all the year round, if every soul of them ate as hearty as ploughmen, and if they never touched a morsel of any kind of meat but venison ! For what, and *for whom*, then, are deer kept in the New Forest ; and why an expense of hay-farm, of sheds, of racks, of keepers, of lodges, and other things attending the deer and the game ; an expense amounting to more money annually than would have given relief to all the starving manufacturers in the north ! And, again I say, *who* is all this venison and game *for* ? There is more game even in

Kew Gardens than the royal family can want ! And, in short, do they ever taste, or even hear of, any game, or any venison, from the New Forest ?

What a pretty thing here is, then ! Here is another deep bite into us by the long and sharp-fanged aristocracy, who so love Old Sarum ! Is there a man who will say that this is right ? And that the game should be kept, too, to eat up trees, to destroy plantations, to destroy what is first paid for the planting of ! And that the public should pay keepers to preserve this game ! And that the *people* should be *transported* if they go out by night to catch the game that they pay for feeding ! Blessed state of an aristocracy ! It is a pity that it has not a nasty, ugly, obstinate DEBT to deal with ! It might possibly go on for ages, deer and all, were it not for this DEBT. This New Forest is a piece of property as much belonging *to the public* as the Custom House at London is. There is no man, however poor, who has not a right in it. Every man is owner of a part of the deer, the game, and of the money that goes to the keepers ; and yet any man may be *transported* if he go out by night to catch any part of this game ! We are compelled to pay keepers for preserving game to eat up the trees that we are compelled to pay people to plant ! Still however there is comfort ; we *might* be worse off ; for the Turks made the Tartars pay a tax called *tooth-money* ; that is to say, they eat up the victuals of the Tartars, and then made them pay for the *use of their teeth*. No man can say that we are come quite to that yet : and, besides, the poor Tartars had no DEBT, no blessed debt to hold out hope to them.

The same person (a very civil and intelligent man)



that showed me the nursery, took me, in my way back, through some plantations of *oaks*, which have been made amongst fir-trees. It was, indeed, a plantation of Scotch firs, about twelve years old, in rows, at six feet apart. Every third row of firs was left, and oaks were (about six years ago) planted instead of the firs that were grubbed up; and the winter shelter that the oaks have received from the remaining firs has made them grow very finely, though the land is poor. Other oaks planted in the *open*, *twenty years* ago, and in land deemed better, are not nearly so good. However, these oaks, between the firs, will take fifty or sixty good years to make them timber, and until they be *timber*, they are of very little use; whereas the same ground planted with locusts (and the *hares* of "my lords" kept down) would, at this moment, have been worth fifty pounds an acre. What do "my lords" care about this? *For them*, for "my lords," the New Forest would be no better than it is now; no, nor *so good* as it is now; for there would be no hares for them.

From New Park, I was bound to Beaulieu Abbey, and I ought to have gone in a south-easterly direction, instead of going back to Lyndhurst, which lay in precisely the opposite direction. My guide through the plantations was not apprised of my intended route, and, therefore, did not instruct me. Just before we parted, he asked me *my name*: I thought it lucky that he had not asked it before! When we got nearly back to Lyndhurst, we found that we had come three miles out of our way; indeed, it made six miles altogether; for we were, when we got to Lyndhurst, three miles further from Beaulieu Abbey than we were when we were at New Park. We



wanted, very much, to go to the site of this ancient and famous abbey, of which the people of the New Forest seemed to know very little. They call the place *Bewley*, and even in the maps it is called *Bauley*. *Ley*, in the Saxon language, means *place*, or rather *open place*: so that they put *ley* in place of *lieu*, thus beating the Normans out of some part of the name at any rate. I wished, besides, to see a good deal of this New Forest. I had been, before, from Southampton to Lyndhurst, from Lyndhurst to Lymington, from Lymington to Sway. I had now come in on the north of Minstead from Romsey, so that I had seen the north of the forest and all the west side of it down to the sea. I had now been to New Park and had got back to Lyndhurst; so that, if I rode across the forest down to Beaulieu I went right across the middle of it, from north-west to south-east. Then, if I turned towards Southampton, and went to Dipten, and on to Ealing, I should see, in fact, the whole of this forest, or nearly the whole of it.

We therefore started, or rather turned away from Lyndhurst, as soon as we got back to it, and went about six miles over a heath, even worse than Bagshot Heath; as barren as it is possible for land to be. A little before we came to the village of Beaulieu (which, observe, the people call *Beuley*), we went through a wood, chiefly of beech, and that beech seemingly destined to grow food for pigs, of which we saw, during this day, many, many thousands. I should think that we saw at least a hundred hogs to one deer. I stopped, at one time, and counted the hogs and pigs just round about me, and they amounted to 140, all within 50 or 60 yards of my horse. After a very pleasant ride on land without a stone in it,

we came down to the Beaulieu river, the highest branch of which rises at the foot of a hill about a mile and a half to the north-east of Lyndhurst. For a great part of the way down to Beaulieu it is a very insignificant stream. At last, however, augmented by springs from the different sand-hills, it becomes a little river, and has, on the sides of it, lands which were, formerly, very beautiful meadows. When it comes to the village of Beaulieu, it forms a large pond of a great many acres ; and on the east side of this pond is the spot where this famous abbey formerly stood, and where the external walls of which, or a large part of them, are now actually standing. We went down on the western side of the river. The abbey stood, and the ruins stand, on the eastern side.

Happening to meet a man before I got into the village I, pointing with my whip across towards the abbey, said to the man, " I suppose there is a bridge down here to get across to the abbey." " That's not the abbey, sir," says he : " the abbey is about four miles further on." I was astonished to hear this ; but he was very positive ; said that some people called it the abbey ; but that the abbey was further on ; and was at a farm occupied by farmer John Biel. Having chapter and verse for it, as the saying is, I believed the man ; and pushed on towards farmer John Biel's, which I found, as he had told me, at the end of about four miles. When I got there (not having, observe, gone over the water to ascertain that the other was the spot where the abbey stood), I really thought, at first, that this must have been the site of the Abbey of Beaulieu ; because, the name meaning *fine place*, this was a thousand times finer place than that where the abbey, as I afterwards found, really



stood. After looking about it for some time, I was satisfied that it had not been an abbey ; but the place is one of the finest that ever was seen in this world. It stands at about half a mile's distance from the water's edge at high-water mark, and at about the middle of the space along the coast from Calshot Castle to Lymington haven. It stands, of course, upon a rising ground ; it has a gentle slope down to the water. To the right, you see Hurst Castle, and that narrow passage called the Needles, I believe ; and, to the left, you see Spithead, and all the ships that are sailing or lie anywhere opposite Portsmouth. The Isle of Wight is right before you, and you have in view, at one and the same time, the towns of Yarmouth, Newton, Cowes, and Newport, with all the beautiful fields of the island, lying upon the side of a great bank before, and going up the ridge of hills in the middle of the island. Here are two little streams, nearly close to the ruin, which filled ponds for fresh-water fish ; while there was the Beaulieu river at about half a mile or three quarters of a mile to the left, to bring up the salt-water fish. The ruins consist of part of the walls of a building about 200 feet long and about 40 feet wide. It has been turned into a barn, in part, and the rest into cattle-sheds, cow-pens, and inclosures and walls to inclose a small yard. But there is another ruin which was a church or chapel, and which stands now very near to the farm-house of Mr. John Biel, who rents the farm of the Duchess of Buccleugh, who is now the owner of the abbey-lands and of the lands belonging to this place. The little church or chapel, of which I have just been speaking, appears to have been a very beautiful building. A part only of its walls are standing ; but you see, by



what remains of the arches, that it was finished in a manner the most elegant and expensive of the day in which it was built. Part of the outside of the building is now surrounded by the farmer's garden ; the interior is partly a pig-stye and partly a goose-pen. Under that arch which had once seen so many rich men bow their heads, we entered into the goose-pen, which is by no means one of the *niciest* concerns in the world. Beyond the goose-pen was the pig-stye, and in it a hog which, when fat, will weigh about 30 score, actually rubbing his shoulders against a little sort of column which had supported the font and its holy water. The farmer told us that there was a hole, which, indeed, we saw, going down into the wall, or rather into the column where the font had stood. And he told us that many attempts had been made to bring water to fill that hole, but that it never had been done.

Mr. Biel was very civil to us. As far as related to us, he performed the office of hospitality, which was the main business of those who formerly inhabited the spot. He asked us to dine with him, which we declined, for want of time ; but being exceedingly hungry, we had some bread and cheese and some very good beer. The farmer told me that a great number of gentlemen had come there to look at that place ; but that he never could find out what the place had been, or what the place at Beuley had been. I told him that I would, when I got to London, give him an account of it ; that I would write the account down, and send it down to him. He seemed surprised that I should make such a promise, and expressed his wish not to give me so much trouble. I told him not to say a word about the matter, for that

his bread and cheese and beer were so good that they deserved a full history to be written of the place where they had been eaten and drunk. "God bless me, sir, no, no!" I said I will, upon my soul, farmer. I now left him, very grateful on our part for his hospitable reception, and he, I dare say, hardly being able to believe his own ears at the generous promise that I had made him, which promise, however, I am now about to fulfil. I told the farmer a little, upon the spot, to begin with. I told him that the name was all wrong: that it was not *Beuley* but *Beaulieu*; and that *Beaulieu* meant *fine place*; and I proved this to him in this manner. You know, said I, farmer, that when a girl has a sweetheart, people call him her *beau*? Yes, said he, so they do. Very well. You know also that we say, sometimes, you shall have this in *lieu* of that; and that when we say *lieu*, we mean in *place* of that. Now the *beau* means *fine*, as applied to the young man, and the *lieu* means *place*; and thus it is, that the name of this place is *Beaulieu*, as it is so fine as you see it is. He seemed to be wonderfully pleased with the discovery; and we parted, I believe, with hearty good wishes on his part, and I am sure with very sincere thanks on my part.

The Abbey of Beaulieu was founded in the year 1204, by King John, for thirty monks of the reformed Benedictine Order. It was dedicated to the blessed Virgin Mary; it flourished until the year 1540, when it was suppressed, and the lands confiscated, in the reign of Henry VIII. Its revenues were, at that time, *four hundred and twenty-eight pounds, six shillings and eight-pence a year*, making in money of the present day upwards of *eight thousand five hundred pounds a year*. The



lands and the abbey, and all belonging to it, were granted by the king to one Thomas Wriothesley, who was a court-pander of that day. From him it passed by sale, by will, by marriage or by something or another, till at last it has got, after passing through various hands, into the hands of the Duchess of Buccleugh. So much for the abbey ; and now as for the ruins on the farm of Mr. John Biel : they were the dwelling-place of Knights' Templars, or Knights of St. John of Jerusalem. The building they inhabited was called an hospital, and their business was to relieve travellers, strangers, and persons in distress ; and, if called upon, to accompany the king in his wars to uphold Christianity. Their estate was also confiscated by Henry VIII. It was worth at the time of being confiscated upwards of *two thousand pounds a year*, money of the present day. This establishment was founded a little before the Abbey of Beaulieu was founded ; and it was this foundation and not the other that gave the name of Beaulieu to both establishments. The abbey is not situated in a very fine place. The situation is low ; the lands above it rather a swamp than otherwise ; pretty enough, altogether ; but by no means a fine place. The Templars had all the reason in the world to give the name of Beaulieu to their place. And it is by no means surprising that the monks were willing to apply it to their abbey.

Now, farmer John Biel, I dare say, that you are a very good Protestant ; and I am a monstrous good Protestant too. We cannot bear the pope, nor " they their priests that makes men confess their sins and go down upon their marrow-bones before them." But, master Biel, let us give the devil his due ; and let us not act worse by



those Roman Catholics (who, by the by, were our forefathers) than we are willing to act by the devil himself. Now then, here were a set of monks, and also a set of Knights' Templars. Neither of them could marry ; of course, neither of them could have wives and families. They could possess no private property ; they could bequeath nothing ; they could own nothing, but that which they owned in common with the rest of their body. They could hoard no money ; they could save nothing. Whatever they received, as rent for their lands, they must necessarily spend upon the spot. They did spend it all upon the spot ; they kept all the poor ; Beuley, and all round about Beuley, saw no misery, and had never heard the damned name of pauper pronounced, as long as those monks and Templars continued. You and I are excellent Protestants, farmer John Biel ; you and I have often assisted on the 5th of November to burn Guy Fawkes, the pope and the devil. But you and I, farmer John Biel, would much rather be life-holders under monks and Templars, than rack-renters under duchesses. The monks and the knights were the *lords* of their manors ; but the farmers under them were not rack-renters ; the farmers under them held by lease of lives, continued in the same farms from father to son for hundreds of years ; they were real yeomen, and not miserable rack-renters, such as now till the land of this once happy country, and who are little better than the drivers of the labourers for the profit of the landlords. Farmer John Biel, what the Duchess of Buccleugh does you know, and I do not. She may, for anything that I know to the contrary, leave her farms on lease of lives, with rent so very moderate and easy as for the farm to be

half as good as the farmer's own, at any rate. The duchess may, for anything that I know to the contrary, feed all the hungry, clothe all the naked, comfort all the sick, and prevent the hated name of *pauper* from being pronounced in the district of Beuley ; her grace may, for anything that I know to the contrary, make poor-rates to be wholly unnecessary and unknown in your country ; she may receive, lodge, and feed the stranger ; she may, in short, employ the rents of this fine estate of Beuley to make the whole district happy ; she may not carry a farthing of the rents away from the spot ; and she may consume, by herself, and her own family and servants, only just as much as is necessary to the preservation of their life and health. Her grace may do all this ; I do not say or insinuate that she does not do it all ; but, Protestant here or Protestant there, farmer John Biel, this I do say, that unless her grace do all this, the monks and the Templars were better for Beuley than her grace.

From the former station of the Templars, from real Beaulieu of the New Forest, we come back to the village of Beaulieu, and there crossed the water to come on towards Southampton. Here we passed close along under the old abbey walls, a great part of which are still standing. There is a mill here which appears to be turned by the fresh water, but the fresh water falls here, into the salt water, as at the village of Botley. We did not stop to go about the ruins of the abbey ; for you seldom make much out by minute inquiry. It is the political history of these places, or, at least, their connection with political events, that is interesting. Just about the banks of this little river there are some woods and coppices and some corn-land ; but at the distance



of half a mile from the water-side we came out again upon the intolerable heath, and went on for seven or eight miles over that heath, from the village of Beaulieu to that of Marchwood, having a list of trees and enclosed lands away to our right all the way along, which list of trees from the south-west side of that arm of the sea which goes from Calshot Castle to Redbridge, passing by Southampton, which lies on the north-east side. Never was a more barren tract of land than these seven or eight miles. We had come seven miles across the forest in another direction in the morning; so that a poorer spot than this New Forest there is not in all England; nor, I believe, in the whole world. It is more barren and miserable than Bagshot Heath. There are less fertile spots in it in proportion to the extent of each. Still it is so large, it is of such great extent, being, if moulded into a circle, not so little, I believe, as 60 or 70 miles in circumference, that it must contain some good spots of land, and if properly and honestly managed those spots must produce a prodigious quantity of timber. It is a pretty curious thing that while the admirers of the paper-system are boasting of our "*waust improvements, ma'am,*" there should have been such a visible and such an enormous dilapidation in all the solid things of the country. I have, in former parts of this ride, stated that in some counties, while the parsons have been pocketing the amount of the tithes and of the glebe, they have suffered the parsonage-houses either to fall down and to be lost, brick by brick and stone by stone, or to become such miserable places as to be unfit for anything bearing the name of a gentleman to live in; I have stated, and I am at any time ready to prove, that



in some counties this is the case in more than one half of the parishes !

And now, amidst all these "*waust improvements*," let us see how the account of timber stands in the New Forest ! In the year 1608, a survey of the timber in the New Forest was made, when there were loads of oak timber fit for the navy, 315,477. Mark that, reader. Another survey was taken in the year 1783 ; that is to say, in the glorious jubilee reign. And when there were, in this same New Forest, loads of oak timber fit for the navy, 20,830. "Waust improvement, ma'am," under "the pilot that weathered the storm," and in the reign of jubilee ! What the devil, some one would say, could have become of all this timber ? Does the reader observe, that there were 315,477 *loads* ? and does he observe that a load is *fifty-two cubic feet* ? Does the reader know what is the price of this load of timber ? I suppose it is now, taking in lop, top and bark, and bought upon the spot (timber fit for the navy, mind !), ten pounds a load at the least. But let us suppose that it has been, upon an average, since the year 1608, just the time that the Stuarts were mounting the throne ; let us suppose that it has been, on an average, four pounds a load. Here is a pretty tough sum of money. This must have gone into the pockets of somebody. At any rate, if we had the same quantity of timber now that we had when the Protestant Reformation took place, or even when old Betsy turned up her toes, we should be now three millions of money richer than we are ; not in *bills* ; not in notes payable to bearer on demand ; not in Scotch "cash credits" ; not, in short, in lies, falseness, impudence, downright blackguard cheatery

and mining shares and "Greek cause" and the devil knows what.

I shall have occasion to return to this New Forest, which is, in reality, though, in general, a very barren district, a much more interesting object to Englishmen than are the services of my Lord Palmerston, and the warlike undertakings of Burdett, Galloway and Company; but I cannot quit this spot, even for the present, without asking the Scotch population-mongers and Malthus and his crew, and especially George Chalmers, if he should yet be creeping about upon the face of the earth, what becomes of all their notions of the scantiness of the ancient population of England; what becomes of all these notions, of all their bundles of ridiculous lies about the fewness of the people in former times; what becomes of them all, if historians have told us one word of truth with regard to the formation of the New Forest by William the Conqueror. All the historians say, every one of them says, that this king destroyed several populous towns and villages in order to make this New Forest.

### WESTON, NEAR SOUTHAMPTON

WESTON GROVE,  
18 Oct. 1826.

I BROKE off abruptly, under this same date, in my last Register, when speaking of William the Conqueror's demolishing of towns and villages to make the New Forest; and I was about to show that all the historians have told us lies the most abominable about this affair of the New

Forest ; or that the Scotch writers on population, and particularly Chalmers, have been the greatest of fools or the most impudent of impostors. I therefore now resume this matter, it being, in my opinion, a matter of great interest, at a time when, in order to account for the present notoriously *bad living* of the people of England, it is asserted that they are become greatly more numerous than they formerly were. This would be no defence of the government, even if the fact were so ; but, as I have over and over again proved, the fact is false ; and to this I challenge denial, that either churches and great mansions and castles were formerly made without hands ; or England was, seven hundred years ago, much more populous than it is now. But what has the formation of the New Forest to do with this ? A great deal ; for the historians tell us that, in order to make this forest William the Conqueror destroyed “ many populous towns and villages, and thirty-six parish churches ! ” The devil he did ! How *populous* then, good God, must England have been at that time, which was about the year 1090 ; that is to say, 736 years ago ! For the Scotch will hardly contend that the *nature of the soil* has been changed for the worse since that time, especially as it has not been cultivated. No, no ; *brassey* as they are, they will not do that. Come, then, let us see how this matter stands.

This forest has been crawled upon by favourites, and is now much smaller than it used to be. A time may, and *will* come, for inquiring *how* George Rose, and others, became *owners* of some of the very best parts of this once public property ; a time for such inquiry *must* come, before the people of England will ever give their consent



to a *reduction of the interest of the debt* ! But this we know, that the New Forest formerly extended, westward, from the Southampton Water and the river Oux to the river Avon, and northward from Lymington Haven to the borders of Wiltshire. We know that this was its utmost extent ; and we know also that the towns of Christchurch, Lymington, Ringwood, and Fordingbridge, and the villages of Bolder, Fawley, Lyndhurst, Dipden, Eling, Minstead, and all the other villages that now have churches ; we know, I say (and pray mark it), that all these towns and villages existed before the Norman Conquest : because the *Roman names* of several of them (all the towns) are in print, and because an account of them all is to be found in *Doomsday Book*, which was made by this very William the Conqueror. Well then, now, Scotch population-liars, and you Malthusian blasphemers, who contend that God has implanted in man a *principle that leads him to starvation* ; come, now, and face this history of the New Forest. Cooke,\* in his *Geography of Hampshire*, says that the Conqueror destroyed here “ many populous towns and villages, and thirty-six parish churches.” The same writer says, that in the time of Edward the Confessor (*just* before the Conqueror came), “ two-thirds of the forest was inhabited and cultivated.” Guthrie says nearly the same thing. But let us hear the two historians who are now pitted against each other, Hume and Lingard. The former (vol. ii. p. 217) says : “ There was one pleasure to which William, as well as all the Normans and ancient Saxons, was extremely addicted, and that was hunting ; but this pleasure he indulged more at the expense of his unhappy subjects, whose interests he always disregarded, than to

the loss or diminution of his own revenue. Not content with those large forests which former kings possessed in all parts of England, he resolved to make a new forest, near Winchester, the usual place of his residence : and for that purpose he *laid waste* the county of Hampshire, *for an extent of thirty miles, expelled the inhabitants* from their houses, seized their property, even *demolished churches and convents*, and made the sufferers no compensation for the injury." Pretty well for a pensioned Scotchman : and now let us hear Dr. Lingard, to prevent his society from *presenting whose work to me*, the sincere and pious Samuel Butler was ready to go down upon his *marrow bones* ; let us hear the good doctor upon this subject. He says (vol. i. pp. 452 and 453), " Though the king possessed sixty-eight forests, besides parks and chases, in different parts of England, he was not yet satisfied, but for the occasional accommodation of his court afforested an *extensive tract of country* lying between the city of Winchester and the sea coast. *The inhabitants were expelled* : the cottages and the *churches were burnt* ; and more than *thirty square miles* of a rich and populous district were *withdrawn from cultivation*, and converted into a *wilderness*, to afford sufficient range for the deer and ample space for the royal diversion. The memory of this act of despotism has been perpetuated in the name of the New Forest, which it retains at the present day, after the lapse of seven hundred and fifty years."

" *Historians* " should be careful how they make statements relative to *places* which are within the scope of the reader's *inspection*. It is next to impossible not to believe that the Doctor has, in this case (a very interesting one), merely *copied* from Hume. Hume says that



the king “*expelled* the inhabitants ;” and Lingard says “ the inhabitants *were expelled* :” Hume says that the king “*demolished* the churches ;” and Lingard says that “ the churches were *burnt* ;” but Hume says churches “ and *convents*,” and Lingard *knew* that to be a lie. The Doctor was too learned upon the subject of “ *convents* ” to follow the Scotchman here. Hume says that the king “*laid waste* the country for an *extent of thirty miles*.” The Doctor says that a district of *thirty square miles* was withdrawn from cultivation and converted into a *wilderness*.” Now what Hume meant by the loose phrase, “ an *extent of thirty miles*,” I cannot say ; but this I know, that Dr. Lingard’s “ thirty square miles ” is a piece of ground only five and a half miles each way ! So that the Doctor has got here a curious “ *district*,” and a not less curious “ *wilderness* ;” and what number of *churches* could William find to *burn* in a space five miles and a half each way ? If the Doctor meant *thirty miles square*, instead of *square miles*, the falsehood is so monstrous as to destroy his credit for ever ; for here we have Nine Hundred Square Miles, containing *five hundred and seventy-six thousand acres of land* ; that is to say, 56,960 acres more than are contained in the whole of the county of Surrey, and 99,840 acres more than are contained in the whole of the county of Berks ! This is “ *history*,” is it ! And these are “ *historians*.”

The true statement is this : the New Forest, according to its ancient state, was bounded thus : by the line going from the river Oux to the river Avon, and which line there separates Wiltshire from Hampshire ; by the river Avon ; by the sea from Christchurch to Calshot Castle ; by the Southampton Water ; and by the river



Oux. These are the boundaries ; and (as any one may, by scale and compass, ascertain) there are, within these boundaries, about 224 square miles, containing 143,360 acres of land. Within these limits there are now remaining eleven parish churches, all of which were in existence before the time of William the Conqueror ; so that if he destroyed thirty-six parish churches, what a populous country this must have been ! There must have been forty-seven parish churches ; so that there was, over this whole district, one parish church to every four and three quarters square miles ! Thus, then, the churches must have stood, on an average, at within one mile and about two hundred yards of each other ! And observe, the parishes could, on an average, contain no more, each, than 2966 acres of land ! Not a very large farm ; so that here was a parish church to every large farm, unless these historians are all fools and liars.

I defy any one to say that I make hazardous assertions : I have plainly described the ancient boundaries : there are the *maps* : any one can, with scale and compass, measure the area as well as I can. I have taken the statements of historians, as they call themselves : I have shown that their histories, as they call them, are fabulous ; OR (and mind this *or*) that England was, at one time, and that too, eight hundred years ago, *beyond all measure more populous than it is now*. For observe, notwithstanding what Dr. Lingard asserts ; notwithstanding that he describes this district as "*rich*," it is the very poorest in the whole kingdom. Dr. Lingard was, I believe, born and bred at Winchester, and how, then, could he be so careless, or, indeed, so regardless of truth (and I do not see why I am to mince the matter with him)

as to describe this as a *rich district*? Innumerable persons have seen *Bagshot Heath*; great numbers have seen the barren heaths between London and Brighton; great numbers also have seen that wide sweep of barrenness which exhibits itself between the Golden Farmer Hill and Blackwater. Nine-tenths of each of these are less barren than four-fifths of the land in the New Forest. Supposing it to be credible that a man so prudent and so wise as William the Conqueror; supposing that such a man should have pitched upon a *rich* and *populous* district wherewith to make a chase; supposing, in short, these historians to have spoken the truth, and supposing this barren land to have been all inhabited and cultivated, and the people so numerous and so rich as to be able to build and endow a parish church upon every four and three quarters square miles upon this extensive district; supposing them to have been so rich in the produce of the soil as to want a priest to be stationed at every mile and 200 yards in order to help them to eat it; supposing, in a word, these historians not to be the most farcical liars that ever put pen upon paper, this country must, at the time of the Norman Conquest, have literally *swarmed* with people; for *there is the land now*, and all the land too: neither Hume nor Dr. Lingard can change the nature of that. There it is, an acre of it not having, upon an average, so much of productive capacity in it as one single square rod, taking the average, of Worcestershire; and if I were to say one single *square yard* I should be right; there is the land; and if that land were, as these historians say it was, covered with people and with churches, what the devil must Worcestershire have been! To this, then, we come at last: having made out



what I undertook to show, namely, that the historians, as they call themselves, are either the greatest fools or the greatest liars that ever existed, or that England was beyond all measure more populous eight hundred years ago than it is now.

Poor, however, as this district is, and culled about as it has been for the best spots of land by those favourites who have got grants of land or leases or something or other, still there are some spots here and there which would grow trees ; but never will it grow trees, or anything else, *to the profit of this nation* until it become *private property*. Public property must, in some cases, be in the hands of public officers ; but this is not an affair of that nature. This is too loose a concern ; too little controllable by superiors. It is a thing calculated for jobbing above all others ; calculated to promote the success of favouritism. Who can imagine that the persons employed about plantations and farms for the public are employed because *they are fit* for the employment ? Supposing the commissioners to hold in abhorrence the idea of paying for services to themselves under the name of paying for services to the public ; supposing them never to have heard of such a thing in their lives, can they imagine that nothing of this sort takes place while they are in London eleven months out of twelve in the year ? I never feel disposed to cast much censure upon any of the persons engaged in such concerns. The temptation is too great to be resisted. The public must pay for everything *à pois d'or*. Therefore, no such thing should be in the hands of the public, or rather of the government ; and I hope to live to see this thing completely taken out of the hands of this government.



## FROM THE EASTERN TOUR

CAMBRIDGE,  
28 March, 1830.

I WENT from Hargham to Lynn on Tuesday, the 23rd ; but owing to the disappointment at Thetford, everything was deranged. It was market-day at Lynn, but no preparations of any sort had been made, and no notification given. I therefore resolved, after staying at Lynn on Wednesday, to make a short tour, and to come back to it again. This tour was to take in Ely, Cambridge, St. Ives, Stamford, Peterborough, Wisbeach, and was to bring me back to Lynn, after a very busy ten days. I was particularly desirous to have a little political preaching at *Ely*, the place where the flogging of the English local militia under a guard of German bayonets cost me so dear.

I got there about noon on Thursday, the 25th, being market-day ; but I had been apprised even before I left Lynn that no place had been provided for my accommodation. A gentleman at Lynn gave me the name of one at Ely who, as he thought, would be glad of an opportunity of pointing out a proper place, and of speaking about it ; but just before I set off from Lynn, I received a notification from this gentleman that he could do nothing in the matter. I knew that Ely was a small place, but I was determined to go and see the spot where the militia-men were flogged, and also determined to find some opportunity or other of relating that story as publicly as I could at Ely, and of describing the *tail* of the story ; of which I will speak presently. Arrived at Ely,

I first walked round the beautiful cathedral, that honour to our Catholic forefathers, and that standing disgrace to our Protestant selves. It is impossible to look at that magnificent pile without *feeling* that we are a fallen race of men. The cathedral would, leaving out the palace of the bishop and the houses of the dean, canons, and prebendaries, weigh more, if it were put into a scale, than all the houses in the town, and all the houses for a mile round the neighbourhood if you exclude the remains of the ancient monasteries. You have only to open your eyes to be convinced that England must have been a far greater and more wealthy country in those days than it is in these days. The hundreds of thousands of loads of stone, of which this cathedral and the monasteries in the neighbourhood were built, must all have been brought by sea from distant parts of the kingdom. These foundations were laid more than a thousand years ago ; and yet there are vagabonds who have the impudence to say that it is the Protestant religion that has made England a great country.

Ely is what one may call a miserable little town : very prettily situated, but poor and mean. Everything seems to be on the decline, as, indeed, is the case everywhere, where the clergy are the masters. They say that this bishop has an income of £18,000 a year. He and the dean and chapter are the owners of all the land and tithes for a great distance round about in this beautiful and most productive part of the country ; and yet this famous building, the cathedral, is in a state of disgraceful irreparable disfigurement. The great and magnificent windows to the east have been shortened at the bottom, and the space plastered up with brick and mortar, in a very



slovenly manner, for the purpose of saving the expense of keeping the glass in repair. Great numbers of the windows in the upper part of the building have been partly closed up in the same manner, and others quite closed up. One door-way, which apparently had stood in need of repair, has been rebuilt in modern style, because it was cheaper; and the churchyard contained a flock of sheep acting as vergers for those who live upon the immense income, not a penny of which ought to be expended upon themselves while any part of this beautiful building is in a state of irreparable ruin. This cathedral was erected "to the honour of God and the Holy Church." My daughters went to the service in the afternoon, in the choir of which they saw God honoured by the presence of *two old men*, forming the whole of the congregation. I dare say that in Catholic times five thousand people at a time have been assembled in this church. The cathedral and town stand upon a little hill, about three miles in circumference, raised up, as it were, for the purpose, amidst the rich fen land by which the hill is surrounded, and I dare say that the town formerly consisted of houses built over a great part of this hill, and of probably from fifty to a hundred thousand people. The people do not now exceed above four thousand, including the bed-ridden and the babies.

Having no place provided for lecturing, and knowing no single soul in the place, I was thrown upon my own resources. The first thing I did was to walk up through the market, which contained much more than an audience sufficient for me; but leaving the market people to carry on their affairs, I picked up a sort of labouring man, asked him if he recollected when the local militia-men



were flogged under the guard of the Germans ; and receiving an answer in the affirmative, I asked him to go and show me the spot, which he did ; he showed me a little common along which the men had been marched, and into a piece of pasture-land, where he put his foot upon the identical spot where the flogging had been executed. On that spot I told him what I had suffered for expressing my indignation at that flogging. I told him that a large sum of English money was now every year sent abroad to furnish half pay and allowances to the officers of those German troops, and to maintain the widows and children of such of them as were dead ; and I added, “ You have to work to help to pay that money ; part of the taxes which you pay on your malt, hops, beer, leather, soap, candles, tobacco, tea, sugar, and everything else, goes abroad every year to pay these people : it has thus been going abroad ever since the peace ; and it will thus go abroad for the rest of your life, if this system of managing the nation’s affairs continue ” ; and I told him that about one million seven hundred thousand pounds had been sent abroad on this account *since the peace*.

When I opened I found that this man was willing to open too ; and he uttered sentiments that would have convinced me, if I had not before been convinced of the fact, that there are very few, even amongst the labourers, who do not clearly understand the cause of their ruin. I discovered that there were two Ely men flogged upon that occasion, and that one of them was still alive and residing near the town. I sent for this man, who came to me in the evening when he had done his work, and who told me that he had lived seven years with the same

master when he was flogged, and was bailiff or head man to his master. He has now a wife and several children ; is a very nice-looking, and appears to be a hard-working, man, and to bear an excellent character.

But how was I to harangue ? For I was determined not to quit Ely without something of that sort. I told this labouring man who showed me the flogging spot my name, which seemed to surprise him very much, for he had heard of me before. After I had returned to my inn I walked back again through the market amongst the farmers ; then went to an inn that looked out upon the market-place, went into an upstairs room, threw up the sash, and sat down at the window, and looked out upon the market. Little groups soon collected to survey me while I sat in a very unconcerned attitude. The farmers had dined, or I should have found out the most numerous assemblage, and have dined with them. The next best thing was to go and sit down in the room where they usually dropped in to drink after dinner ; and as they nearly all smoke, to take a pipe with them. This, therefore, I did ; and after a time we began to talk.

The room was too small to contain a twentieth part of the people that would have come in if they could. It was hot to suffocation ; but, nevertheless, I related to them the account of the flogging, and of my persecution on that account ; and I related to them the account above stated with regard to the English money now sent to the Germans, at which they appeared to be utterly astonished. I had not time sufficient for a lecture, but I explained to them briefly the real cause of the distress which prevailed ; I warned the farmers particularly against the consequences of hoping that this distress



would remove itself. I portrayed to them the effects of the taxes ; and showed them that we owe this enormous burden to the want of being fairly represented in the parliament. Above all things, I did that which I never fail to do, showed them the absurdity of grumbling at the six millions a year given in relief to the poor, while they were silent and seemed to think nothing of the sixty millions of taxes collected by the government at London, and I asked them how any man of property could have the impudence to call upon the labouring man to serve in the militia, and to deny that that labouring man had, in case of need, a clear right to a share of the produce of the land. I explained to them how the poor were originally relieved ; told them that the revenues of the livings, which had their foundation in *charity*, were divided amongst the poor. The demands for repair of the churches and the clergy themselves ; I explained to them how church-rates and poor-rates came to be introduced ; how the burden of maintaining the poor came to be thrown upon the people at large ; how the nation had sunk by degrees ever since the event called the Reformation ; and pointing towards the cathedral I said, “ Can you believe, gentlemen, that when that magnificent pile was reared, and when all the fine monasteries, hospitals, schools, and other resorts of piety and charity existed in this town and neighbourhood ; can you believe that Ely was the miserable little place that it now is ; and that England which had never heard of the name of *pauper* contained the crowds of miserable creatures that it now contains, some starving at stone-cracking by the way-side, and others drawing loaded waggons on that way ? ”



A young man in the room (I having come to a pause) said, " But, sir, were there no poor in Catholic times ? " " Yes," said I, " to be sure there were. The Scripture says that the poor shall never cease out of the land ; and there are five hundred texts of Scripture enjoining on all men to be good and kind to the poor. It is necessary to the existence of civil society that there should be poor. Men have two motives to industry and care in all the walks of life : one to acquire wealth ; but the other and stronger to avoid poverty. If there were no poverty, there would be no industry, no enterprise. But this poverty is not to be made a punishment unjustly severe. Idleness, extravagance, are offences against morality ; but they are not offences of that heinous nature to justify the infliction of starvation by way of punishment. It is therefore, the duty of every man that is able ; it is particularly the duty of every government, and it was a duty faithfully executed by the Catholic church, to take care that no human being should perish for want in a land of plenty ; and to take care, too, that no one should be deficient of a sufficiency of food and raiment, not only to sustain life, but also to sustain health." The young man said : " I thank you, sir ; I am answered."

I strongly advised the farmers to be well with their work-people ; for that, unless their flocks were as safe in their fields as their bodies were in their beds, their lives must be lives of misery ; that if their stacks and barns were not places of as safe deposit for their corn as their drawers were for their money, the life of the farmer was the most wretched upon earth, in place of being the most pleasant, as it ought to be.

CONDITION OF THE ENGLISH PEOPLE COMPARED  
WITH THAT OF THE FRENCH ON THE EVE OF  
THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

BOSTON,  
*Friday, 9 April, 1830.*

It is time for me now, withdrawing myself from these objects visible to the eye, to speak of the state of *the people*, and of the manner in which their affairs are affected by the workings of the system. With regard to the labourers, they are, everywhere, miserable. The wages for those who are employed on the land are, through all the counties that I have come, twelve shillings a week for married men, and less for single ones ; but a large part of them are not even at this season employed on the land. The farmers, for want of means of profitable employment, suffer the men to fall upon the parish ; and they are employed in digging and breaking stone for the roads ; so that the roads are nice and smooth for the sheep and cattle to walk on in their way to the all-devouring jaws of the Jews and other tax-eaters in London and its vicinity. None of the best meat, except by mere accident, is consumed here. To-day (the 20th of April) we have seen hundreds upon hundreds of sheep, as fat as hogs, go by this inn door, their toes, like those of the foot-marks at the entrance of the lion's den, all pointing towards the Wen ; and the landlord gave us for dinner a little skinny, hard leg of old ewe mutton ! Where the man got it, I cannot imagine. Thus it is : every good thing is literally driven or carried away out of the country. In walking out



yesterday, I saw three poor fellows digging stone for the roads, who told me that they never had anything but bread to eat, and water to wash it down. One of them was a widower with three children ; and his pay was eighteenpence a day ; that is to say, about three pounds of bread a day each, for six days in the week ; nothing for Sunday, and nothing for washing, lodging, clothing, candle-light, or fuel ! Just such was the state of things in France at the eve of the Revolution ! Precisely such ; and precisely the same were the *causes*. Whether the effect will be the same, I do not take upon myself positively to determine. Just on the other side of the hedge, while I was talking to these men, I saw about two hundred fat sheep in a rich pasture. I did not tell them what I might have told them ; but I explained to them why the farmers were unable to give them a sufficiency of wages. They listened with great attention ; and said that they did believe that the farmers were in great distress themselves.

With regard to the farmers, it is said here that the far greater part, if sold up, would be found to be insolvent. The tradesmen in country towns are, and must be, in but little better state. They all tell you they do not sell half so many goods as they used to sell ; and, of course, the manufacturers must suffer in the like degree. There is a diminution and deterioration, every one says, in the stocks upon the farms. *Sheep-washing* is a sort of business in this country ; and I heard at Boston that the sheep-washers say that there is a gradual falling off in point of the numbers of sheep washed.

The farmers are all gradually sinking in point of property. The very rich ones do not feel that ruin is abso-



lutely approaching ; but they are all alarmed ; and as to the poorer ones, they are fast falling into the rank of paupers. When I was at Ely a gentleman who appeared to be a great farmer told me in the presence of fifty farmers, at the White Hart Inn, that he had seen that morning *three men* cracking stones on the road as paupers of the parish of Wilbarton ; and that all these men had been *overseers of the poor of that same parish within the last seven years*. Wheat keeps up in price to about an average of seven shillings a bushel ; which is owing to our two successive bad harvests ; but fat beef and pork are at a very low price, and mutton not much better. The beef was selling at Lynn for five shillings the stone of fourteen pounds, and the pork at four and sixpence. The wool (one of the great articles of produce in these countries) selling for less than half of its former price.

And here let me stop to observe that I was well informed before I left London that merchants were exporting our long wool to France, where it paid *thirty per cent. duty*. Well, say the landowners, but we have to thank Huskisson for this, at any rate ; and that is true enough ; for the law was most rigid against the export of wool ; but what will the *manufacturers* say ? Thus the collective goes on, smashing one class and then another ; and, resolved to adhere to the taxes, it knocks away, one after another, the props of the system itself. By every measure that it adopts for the sake of obtaining security, or of affording relief to the people, it does some act of crying injustice. To save itself from the natural effects of its own measures, it knocked down the country bankers, in direct violation of the law in 1822. It is now about to lay its heavy hand on the big brewers and the

publicans, in order to pacify the call for a reduction of taxes, and with the hope of preventing such reduction in reality. It is making a trifling attempt to save the West Indians from total ruin, and the West India colonies from revolt ; but by that same attempt it reflects injury on the British distillers, and on the growers of barley. Thus it cannot do justice without doing injustice ; it cannot do good without doing evil ; and thus it must continue to do, until it take off, in reality, more than one half of the taxes.

One of the great signs of the poverty of people in the middle rank of life is the falling off of the audiences at the playhouses. There is a playhouse in almost every country town, where the players used to act occasionally ; and in large towns almost always. In some places they have of late abandoned acting altogether. In others they have acted, very frequently, to not more than *ten or twelve persons*. At Norwich the playhouse had been shut up for a long time. I heard of one manager who has become a porter to a warehouse, and his company dispersed. In most places the insides of the buildings seem to be tumbling to pieces ; and the curtains and scenes that they let down seem to be abandoned to the damp and the cobwebs. *My* appearance on the boards seemed to give new life to the drama. I was, until the birth of my third son, a constant haunter of the playhouse, in which I took great delight ; but when *he* came into the world, I said, " Now, Nancy, it is time for us to leave off going to the play." It is really melancholy to look at things now, and to think of things then. I feel great sorrow on account of these poor players ; for though they are made the tools of the government and the cor-



porations and the parsons, it is not their fault, and they have uniformly, whenever I have come in contact with them, been very civil to me. I am not sorry that they are left out of the list of vagrants in the new act ; but in this case, as in so many others, the men have to be grateful to the *women* ; for who believes that this merciful omission would have taken place if so many of the peers had not contracted matrimonial alliances with players ; if so many playeresses had not become peeresses ? We may thank God for disposing the hearts of our lawmakers to be guilty of the same sins and foibles as ourselves ; for when a lord had been sentenced to the pillory, the use of that ancient mode of punishing offences was abolished : when a lord (Castlereagh), who was also a minister of state, had cut his own throat, the degrading punishment of burial in cross-roads was abolished ; and now, when so many peers and great men have taken to wife play-actresses, which the law termed *vagrants*, that term, as applied to the children of Melpomene and Thalia, is abolished ! Laud we the gods that our rulers cannot, after all, divest themselves of flesh and blood ! For the Lord have mercy on us, if their great souls were once to soar above that tenement !

Lord Stanhope cautioned his brother peers, a little while ago, against the angry feeling which was *rising up in the poor against the rich*. His lordship is a wise and humane man, and this is evident from all his conduct. Nor is this angry feeling confined to the counties in the south, where the rage of the people, from the very nature of the local circumstances, is more formidable ; woods and coppices and dingles and by-lanes and sticks and stones ever at hand, being resources unknown in counties



like this. When I was at St. Ives, in Huntingdonshire, an open country, I sat with the farmers, and smoked a pipe by way of preparation for evening service, which I performed on a carpenter's bench in a wheelwright's shop: my friends, the players, never having gained any regular settlement in that grand mart for four-legged fat meat, coming from the Fens, and bound to the Wen. While we were sitting, a hand-bill was handed round the table, advertising *farming stock* for sale; and amongst the implements of husbandry "an *excellent fire-engine, several steel traps, and spring guns!*" And this is the life, is it, of an English *farmer*? I walked on about six miles of the road from Holbeach to Boston. I have before observed upon the inexhaustible riches of this land. At the end of about five miles and three quarters I came to a public-house, and thought I would get some breakfast; but the poor woman, with a tribe of children about her, had not a morsel of either meat or bread! At a house called an inn, a little further on, the landlord had no meat except a little bit of chine of bacon; and though there were a good many houses near the spot, the landlord told me that the people were become so poor that the butchers had left off killing meat in the neighbourhood. Just the state of things that existed in France on the eve of the Revolution. On that very spot I looked round me and counted more than two thousand fat sheep in the pastures! How long, how long, good God! is this state of things to last? How long will these people starve in the midst of plenty? How long will fire-engines, steel traps, and spring guns be, in such a state of things, a protection to property? When I was at Beverley, a gentleman told me, it was Mr. Dawson of

that place, that some time before a farmer had been sold up by his landlord ; and that, in a few weeks afterwards, the farm-house was on fire, and that when the servants of the landlord arrived to put it out, they found the handle of the pump taken away and that the homestead was totally destroyed. This was told me in the presence of several gentlemen, who all spoke of it as a fact of perfect notoriety.

Another respect in which our situation so exactly resembles that of France on the eve of the Revolution is the *fleeing from the country* in every direction. When I was in Norfolk there were four hundred persons, generally young men, labourers, carpenters, wheelwrights, millwrights, smiths, and bricklayers ; most of them with some money, and some farmers and others with good round sums. These people were going to Quebec, in timber-ships, and from Quebec by land into the United States. They had been told that they would not be suffered to land in the United States from on board of ship. The roguish villains had deceived them : but no matter ; they will get into the United States ; and going through Canada will do them good, for it will teach them to detest everything belonging to it. From Boston two great barge loads had just gone off by canal to Liverpool, most of them farmers ; all carrying some money, and some as much as two thousand pounds each. From the North and West Riding of Yorkshire numerous waggons have gone, carrying people to the canals leading to Liverpool ; and a gentleman whom I saw at Peterboro' told me that he saw some of them ; and that the men all appeared to be respectable farmers. At Hull the scene would delight the eyes of the wise Burdett ;



for here the emigration is going on in the "old Roman plan." Ten large ships have gone this spring, laden with these fugitives from the fangs of taxation; some bound direct to the ports of the United States; others, like those at Yarmouth, for Quebec. Those that have most money go direct to the United States. The single men, who are taken for a mere trifle in the Canada ships, go that way, have nothing but their carcasses to carry over the rocks and swamps, and through the myriads of place-men and pensioners in that miserable region; there are about fifteen more ships going from this one port this spring. The ships are fitted up with berths as transports for the carrying of troops. I went on board one morning, and saw the people putting their things on board and stowing them away. Seeing a nice young woman, with a little baby in her arms, I told her that she was going to a country where she would be sure that her children would never want victuals; where she might make her own malt, soap, and candles, without being half put to death for it, and where the blaspheming Jews would not have a mortgage on the life's labour of her children.

There is at Hull one farmer going who is seventy years of age; but who takes out five sons and fifteen hundred pounds! Brave and sensible old man! and good and affectionate father! He is performing a truly parental and sacred duty; and he will die with the blessings of his sons on his head, for having rescued them from this scene of slavery, misery, cruelty, and crime. Come, then, Wilmot Horton, with your sensible associates, Burdett and Poulett Thomson; come into Lincolnshire, Norfolk, and Yorkshire; come and bring Parson Malthus along



with you ; regale your sight with this delightful " stream of emigration " ; congratulate the " greatest captain of the age," and your brethren of the Collective : congratulate the " noblest assembly of free men," on these the happy effects of their measures. Oh ! no, Wilmot ! Oh ! no, generous and sensible Burdett, it is not the aged, the infirm, the halt, the blind, and the idiots that go : it is the youth, the strength, the wealth, and the spirit that will no longer brook hunger and thirst, in order that the maws of tax-eaters and Jews may be crammed. You want the Irish to go, and so they will *at our expense*, and all the bad of them, to be kept at our expense on the rocks and swamps of Nova Scotia and Canada. You have no money to send them away with : the tax-eaters want it all ; and thanks to the " improvements of the age," the steam-boats will continue to bring them in shoals in pursuit of the orts of the food that their taskmasters have taken away from them.

After evening lecture, at Horncastle, a very decent farmer came to me and asked me about America, telling me that he was resolved to go, for that if he stayed much longer, he should not have a shilling to go with. I promised to send him a letter from Louth to a friend at New York, who might be useful to him there, and give him good advice. I forgot it at Louth ; but I will do it before I go to bed. From the Thames, and from the several ports down the Channel, about two thousand have gone this spring. All the flower of the labourers of the east of Sussex and west of Kent will be culled out and sent off in a short time. From Glasgow the sensible Scotch are pouring out amain. Those that are poor and cannot pay their passages, or can rake together only a

trifle, are going to a rascally heap of sand and rock and swamp, called Prince Edward's Island, in the horrible Gulf of St. Lawrence ; but when the American vessels come over with Indian corn and flour and pork and beef and poultry and eggs and butter and cabbages and green pease and asparagus for the soldier-officers and other tax-eaters that we support upon that lump of worthlessness ; for the lump itself bears nothing but potatoes ; when these vessels come, which they are continually doing, winter and summer ; towards the fall, with apples and pears and melons and cucumbers ; and, in short, everlastingly coming and taking away the amount of taxes raised in England ; when these vessels return, the sensible Scotch will go back in them for a dollar a head, till at last not a man of them will be left but the bed-ridden. Those villainous colonies are held for no earthly purpose but that of furnishing a pretence of giving money to the relations and dependents of the aristocracy ; and they are the nicest channels in the world through which to send English taxes to enrich and strengthen the United States. Withdraw the English taxes, and, except in a small part in Canada, the whole of those horrible regions would be left to the bears and the savages in the course of a year.

This emigration is a famous blow given to the borough-mongers. The way to New York is now as well known and as easy and as little expensive as from old York to London. First the Sussex parishes sent their paupers ; they invited over others that were not paupers ; they invited over people of some property ; then persons of greater property ; now substantial farmers are going ; men of considerable fortune will follow. It is the letters

written across the Atlantic that do the business. Men of fortune will soon discover that, to secure to their families their fortunes, and to take these out of the grasp of the inexorable tax-gatherer, they must get away. Every one that goes will take twenty after him; and thus it will go on. There can be no interruption but *war*: and war the Thing dares not have. As to France or the Netherlands, or any part of that hell called Germany, Englishmen can never settle there. The United States form another England without its unbearable taxes, its insolent game laws, its intolerable dead-weight, and its treadmills.

*FROM PROGRESS IN THE NORTH*

ALNWICK,

7 Oct. 1832.

FROM Sunderland I came early in the morning of the 5th of October once more (and I hope not for the last time) to Newcastle, there to lecture on the paper-money, which I did in the evening. But before I proceed further, I must record something that I heard at Sunderland respecting that babbling fellow Trevor! My readers will recollect the part which this fellow acted with regard to the "liberal Whig prosecution;" they will recollect that it was he who first mentioned the thing in the House of Commons, and suggested to the wise ministers the propriety of prosecuting me; that Lord Althorp and Denman *hummed* and *ha'd* about it; that the latter had *not read it*, and that the former would offer no opinion upon



it ; that Trevor came on again, encouraged by the works of the curate of Crowhurst, and by the bloody, bloody old *Times*, whose former editor and now printer is actually a candidate for Berkshire, supported by that unprincipled political prattler, Jephthah Marsh, whom I will call to an account as soon as I get back to the south. My readers will further recollect that the bloody old *Times* then put forth another document as a confession of Goodman, made to Burrell, Tredcroft, and Scawen Blunt, while the culprit was in Horsham gaol with a halter actually about his neck. My readers know the *result* of this affair ; but they have yet to learn some circumstances belonging to its progress, which circumstances are not to be stated here. They recollect, however, that from the very first I treated this Trevor with the utmost disdain ; and that at the head of the articles which I wrote about him, I put these words, “ TREVOR AND POTATOES ; ” meaning that he hated me because I was resolved, fire or fire not, that working men should not live upon potatoes in my country. Now, mark ; now, chopsticks of the south, mark the sagacity, the justice, the promptitude, and the excellent taste of these lads of the north ! At the last general election, which took place after the “ liberal Whig prosecution ” had been begun, Trevor was a candidate for the city of Durham, which is about fourteen miles from this busy town of Sunderland. The freemen of Durham are the voters in that city, and some of these freemen reside at Sunderland. Therefore, this fellow (I wish to God you could see him !) went to Sunderland to canvass these freemen residing there ; and they pelted him out of the town ; and (oh appropriate missiles !) pelted him out with the “ accursed root,” hallooing and

shouting after him—" *Trevor and potatoes!* " Ah! stupid coxcomb! little did he imagine, when he was playing his game with Althorp and Denman, what would be the ultimate effect of that game!

From Newcastle to Morpeth (the country is what I before described it to be). From Morpeth to this place (Alnwick), the country, generally speaking, is very poor as to land, scarcely any trees at all; the farms enormously extensive; only two churches, I think, in the whole of the twenty miles; scarcely anything worthy the name of a tree, and not one single dwelling having the appearance of a labourer's house. Here appears neither hedging nor ditching; no such thing as a sheepfold or a hurdle to be seen; the cattle and sheep very few in number; the farm servants living in the farmhouses, and very few of them; the thrashing done by machinery and horses; a country without people. This is a pretty country to take a minister from to govern the south of England! A pretty country to take a lord chancellor from to prattle about *Poor Laws* and about *surplus population!* My Lord Grey has, in fact, spent his life here, and Brougham has spent his life in the Inns of Court, or in the botheration of speculative books. How should either of them know anything about the eastern, southern, or western counties? I wish I had my dignitary Dr. Black here; I would soon make him see that he has all these number of years been talking about the bull's horns instead of his tail and his buttocks. Besides the indescribable pleasure of having seen Newcastle, the Shieldses, Sunderland, Durham, and Hexham, I have now discovered the true ground of all the errors of the Scotch *feelosofers* with regard to population, and



with regard to poor laws. The two countries are as different as any two things of the same nature can possibly be ; that which applies to the one does not at all apply to the other. The agricultural counties are covered all over with parish churches, and with people thinly distributed here and there.

Only look at the two counties of Dorset and Durham. Dorset contains 1005 square miles ; Durham contains 1061 square miles. Dorset has 271 *parishes* ; Durham has 75 parishes. The population of Dorset is scattered over the whole of the county, there being no town of any magnitude in it. The population of Durham, though larger than that of Dorset, is almost all gathered together at the mouths of the Tyne, the Wear, and the Tees. Northumberland has 1871 square miles ; and Suffolk has 1512 square miles. Northumberland has *eighty-eight parishes* ; and Suffolk has *five hundred and ten parishes*. So that here is a county one-third part smaller than that of Northumberland with six times as many villages in it ! What comparison is there to be made between states of society so essentially different ? What rule is there, with regard to population and poor laws, which can apply to both cases ? And how is my Lord Howick, born and bred up in Northumberland, to know how to judge of a population suitable to Suffolk ? Suffolk is a county teeming with production, as well as with people ; and how brutal must that man be who would attempt to reduce the agricultural population of Suffolk to that of the number of Northumberland ! The population of Northumberland, larger than Suffolk as it is, does not equal it in total population by nearly one-third, notwithstanding that one half of its whole population have got



together on the banks of the Tyne. And are we to get rid of our people in the south, and supply the places of them by horses and machines? Why not have the people in the fertile counties of the south, where their very existence causes their food and their raiment to come? Blind and thoughtless must that man be who imagines that all but *farms* in the south are unproductive. I much question whether, taking a strip three miles each way from the road coming from Newcastle to Alnwick, an equal quantity of what is called *waste ground*, together with the cottages that skirt it, do not exceed such strip of ground in point of produce. Yes, the cows, pigs, geese, poultry, gardens, bees and fuel that arise from those *wastes* far exceed, even in the capacity of sustaining people, similar breadths of ground, distributed into these large farms in the poorer parts of Northumberland. I have seen not less than ten thousand geese in one tract of common, in about six miles, going from Chobham towards Farnham in Surrey. I believe these geese alone, raised entirely by care and by the common, to be worth more than the clear profit that can be drawn from any similar breadth of land between Morpeth and Alnwick. What folly is it to talk, then, of applying to the counties of the south principles and rules applicable to a country like this!

To-morrow morning I start for "Modern Athens"! My readers will, I dare say, perceive how much my "*antalluct*" has been improved since I crossed the Tyne. What it will get to when I shall have crossed the Tweed God only knows. I wish very much that I could stop a day at Berwick, in order to find some *feelosofer* to ascertain, by some chemical process, the exact degree of the

improvement of the "*antalluct.*" I am afraid, however, that I shall not be able to manage this ; for I must get along ; beginning to feel devilishly home-sick since I have left Newcastle.

They tell me that Lord Howick, who is just married by the by, made a speech here the other day, during which he said, " that the Reform was only the means to an end ; and that the end was cheap government." Good ! stand to that my lord, and, as you are now married, pray let the country fellows and girls marry too : let us have *cheap government*, and I warrant you that there will be room for us all, and plenty for us to eat and drink. It is the drones, and not the bees, that are too numerous ; it is the vermin who live upon the taxes, and not those who work to raise them, that we want to get rid of. We are keeping fifty thousand tax-eaters to breed gentlemen and ladies for the industrious and laborious to keep. These are the opinions which I promulgate ; and whatever your flatterers may say to the contrary, and whatever *feelosofical* stuff Brougham and his rabble of writers may put forth, these opinions of mine will finally prevail. I repeat my anxious wish (I would call it a hope if I could), that your father's resolution may be equal to his sense, and that he will do that which is demanded by the right which the people have to insist upon measures necessary to restore the greatness and happiness of the country ; and, if he show a disposition to do this, I should deem myself the most criminal of all mankind, if I were to make use of any influence that I possess to render his undertaking more difficult than it naturally must be ; but if he show not

that disposition, it will be my bounden duty to endeavour to drive him from the possession of power ; for, be the consequences to individuals what they may, the greatness, the freedom, and the happiness of England must be restored.



## NOTES

- P. 1, l. 4. **Six Acts.** The Six Acts were passed in 1819 to repress agitation :
1. "To prevent delay in the administration of justice in cases of misdemeanour ;"
  2. "To prevent the training of persons in the use of arms and the practice of military evolutions ;"
  3. "For the prevention and punishment of blasphemous and seditious libels ;"
  4. "To authorise justices of the peace, in certain disturbed counties, to seize and detain arms ;"
  5. "To subject publications to the duties of stamps upon newspapers . . . ;"
  6. "For the prevention of the assembling of seditious assemblies."
- P. 4, l. 3. **To compensate the French people for what they lost by the entrance of the Holy Alliance Armies into their country :** Referring to the occupation of parts of France between 1815 and 1818 by the Allies, after the downfall of Napoleon. The holy Alliance was formed in 1815 between Tzar Alexander, Frederick William of Prussia, and Francis of Austria. The three sovereigns pledged themselves to act according to 'the precepts of Christianity.'
- P. 5, l. 23. **Fundlords :** Magnates who owe their wealth to investing in public funds.
- P. 8, l. 20. **Deeply lamented Queen ;** Queen Caroline, wife of George IV., died in August 1821.
- P. 12, l. 6. **Bobadil :** In Ben Jonson's play, *Every Man in his Humour*.
- P. 12, l. 21. **The Thing :** The system of English Government.
- P. 12, l. 26. **South Sea Bubble :** In 1711 the South Sea Company was formed to trade with Spanish-America. When in 1720 anxiety was felt about the National Debt, a bill was passed enabling those who had lent money to government to exchange their claims for shares in the South Sea Company. Prices of shares rose enormously, a mania for speculation set in, and companies were started for all sorts of wild schemes. Soon the public

found they were paying too highly for prospective advantages; prices fell rapidly, those of the South Sea Company among them. Numbers of people were ruined, and great indignation was felt against Ministers who had encouraged belief in the wealth of the South Sea trade.

- P. 13, l. 30. **Saint-foin** : A low-growing perennial herb, much grown as a forage plant.
- P. 16, l. 14. **The Fieldfares** : A kind of thrush.
- P. 20, l. 30. **Henriade of Voltaire** : The *Henriade* of Voltaire (1694-1778) is an historical poem in ten chants, on the subject of the struggle between Henry IV. of France and the League.
- P. 23, l. 27. **Gallon-Loaf Man** : 'Gallon-loaf' implies what is considered sufficient maintenance for a labourer: the 'man' was Mr. John Bennett, the M.P. for South Wilts.
- P. 26, l. 7. **Burlip Hill** : Burlip Hill, Gloucestershire, from which there is a fine view of the Malvern (*not* Morvan) Hills in Worcestershire. "Morvan Hills in Wales" is apparently a mistake of Cobbett's.
- P. 27, l. 14. **Martello-Towers** : Circular forts built for coast-defence; warning of the approach of enemy shipping was given by striking on a bell with a hammer (Latin: *martulus*).
- P. 27, l. 15. **Catamarans** : Rafts made by yoking logs.
- P. 27, l. 16. **The War for the Bourbons** : After the banishment of Napoleon to Elba, the Bourbon dynasty was restored in France, when Louis XVIII. became King.
- P. 30, l. 1. **Wens** : Wen means a wart: Cobbett constantly refers to London as 'the Wen' because he considered it an excrescence on the country.
- P. 33, ll. 7. **Pretty little Van** : The Right Honourable Nicholas Vansittart, Chancellor of the Exchequer.
- P. 39, l. 16. **Rags** : Bank-notes.
- P. 45, l. 26. **Hickory Wood** : Hickory is the name of several American nut-bearing trees.
- P. 55, l. 20. **Assignats** : Pieces of paper-money secured on State lands, especially used during the French Revolution.
- P. 62, l. 31. **Cliff which is described by Shakespeare** :  
*Edgar: (to blinded Gloucester, whom he has led to what Gloucester thinks is the edge of the cliff).*  
 "How fearful  
 And dizzy 'tis to cast one's eyes so low !

The crows and choughs that wing the midway air  
 Show scarce so gross as beetles : half way down  
 Hangs one that gathers samphire, dreadful trade !  
 Methinks he seems no bigger than his head :  
 The fishermen that walk upon the beach  
 Appear like mice ; and yond tall anchoring bark  
 Diminish'd to her cock ; her cock, a buoy  
 Almost too small for sight : the murmuring surge  
 That on the unnumber'd idle pebble chafes  
 Cannot be heard so high."

*King Lear*, Act IV. Sc. 6.

P. 70. l. 20. **Duties on Salt** : This salt-tax in France was called the Gabelle. The Government held the monopoly of salt, and every family was compelled to buy a certain amount in proportion to its numbers.

P. 72, l. 4. **Lucerne** : A clover-like fodder-plant.

P. 75, l. 24. **Prince Leopold** : Leopold of Saxe-Coburg Saalfeld married Charlotte, daughter of George IV., and became King of the Belgians in 1831.

P. 91, l. 9. **A Little Nimrod** : Nimrod "was a mighty hunter before the Lord : wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord." *Genesis* x. 9.

"Mr. Cobbett, while at Botley, was for years a strict preserver of game, though no 'shot,' keeping sometimes from thirty to forty dogs, greyhounds, pointers, setters, and spaniels. He had a cart's bed full of live hares brought from Berkshire, to turn down on his own farms. He prosecuted one poacher at Winchester, by suing him, as for trespass." (*James Cobbett*.)

P. 95, l. 17. **George** : probably his brother.

P. 96, l. 16. **Some Poet has said** :

*Portia* : "The quality of mercy is not strain'd,—  
 It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven  
 Upon the place beneath : it is twice bless'd,—  
 It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes :"

*The Merchant of Venice*, Act IV. Sc. 1.

P. 98, l. 32. **Platina** : The early name of platinum, a mineral originally discovered in South America, which resembled silver. (Spanish : plata=silver.)

P 102, l. 6. **Old Sarum** : Old Sarum, now deserted, was the former site of Salisbury. The 'aristocrats' are supposed to love it because it was a Rotten Borough, in which, as there were no inhabitants, the Landlords elected the Members of Parliament.



- P. 109, l. 8. **Knights Templars** : A Templar was a member of a military and religious order, consisting of knights, chaplains, and men-at-arms, founded early in the twelfth century, chiefly for the protection of the Holy Sepulchre and of Christian pilgrims visiting the Holy Land. The Templars were so called from their occupation of a building on or contiguous to the site of the Temple of Solomon at Jerusalem.
- l. 9. **Knights of St. John of Jerusalem** : The most celebrated military religious order of the Middle Ages. In 1048 a hospital was dedicated to St. John the Baptist, which had been built by some merchants of Amalfi, to receive the pilgrims from Europe visiting the Holy Sepulchre. The hospice was plundered by the Turks, whereupon the Crusaders came to its aid, and the order became military as well as religious.
- P. 110, l. 20. **Rack-renters** : Those who exact rack-rent, that is an extortionate rent, equal, or nearly equal, to the full value of the land.
- P. 113, l. 12. 'The pilot . . .': Canning's song in praise of the younger Pitt, written in 1802.
- P. 114, l. 9. **Malthus** : Author of the famous *Essay on the Principle of Population* (1798) in which he maintained that the optimistic hopes of Rousseau and Godwin were bound to be frustrated by the natural tendency of population to increase faster than the means of subsistence.
- P. 121, l. 29. **A pois d'or** : 'Pois' is the old-fashioned spelling of 'poids' : 'A poids d'or' means 'very expensive.' ('Worth its weight in gold.')
- P. 122, l. 13. **Cost me so dear** : For his article in the *Register* protesting against military flogging, Cobbett was condemned to two years' imprisonment in Newgate, to pay a fine of a thousand pounds to the King, and at the end of the two years to give bail himself in three thousand pounds, with two sureties in one thousand each, for his keeping the peace for seven years.
- P. 123, l. 21. **Ely** : there is no foundation for Cobbett's theory that Ely had a large population in the Middle Ages. G. G. Coulton, in *The Mediaeval Village* (Cambridge, 1925) speaks of Cobbett's belief that the population of England was larger in 1377 than 1326 as 'a wild delusion.'
- P. 125, l. 21. **Since the peace** : The Peace of Paris, 1814 and 1815, which left territorial questions to be settled by the Congress of Vienna.

- P. 133, l. 14. **When a lord . . . had cut his own throat :** Owing to the continual strain of toil and responsibility, the mind of Lord Londonderry (formerly Castlereagh) became affected. His usually neat handwriting became illegible, he forgot appointments, and in the House of Commons denied all knowledge of a document actually lying before him. In spite of medical supervision, advised both by George IV. and the Duke of Wellington, Lord Londonderry cut his throat with a penknife in his dressing-room, and died almost immediately.
- P. 133, l. 19. **Melpomene and Thalia :** Two of the nine Greek Muses. Melpomene was the Muse of Tragedy, Thalia of Comedy.
- P. 136, l. 30. **The Burdett :** Sir Francis Burdett, a popular Reformer; M.P. for Westminster 1807-1837; twice imprisoned on political charges, became a Conservative after Reform Bill.
- P. 140, l. 3. **Editor and now Printer :** John Walter, 1776-1847, chief proprietor of the *Times* and son of its founder.
- P. 142, l. 23. **Lord Howick :** Charles Grey, son of the Earl Grey who as Prime Minister carried the Reform Bill in 1832.
- P. 143, l. 26. **Modern Athens :** Edinburgh.

## QUESTIONS

1. What evidence do the *Rides* afford of Cobbett having served in the Army?
2. "Cobbett's loves and hatreds knew no flagging while the breath was in him." Discuss.
3. Illustrate from the *Rides* Cobbett's opinion of Paper-Money, Spring-Guns, and Martello Towers.
4. Compose an imaginary article by a landlord, answering Cobbett's *Observations upon Game Laws*, OR  
Write an imaginary speech refuting *The Rustic Harangue*.
5. In what respects does Cobbett compare the working class of England with that of France?
6. Give instances of Cobbett's sense of humour.
7. What notice during the *Rides* does Cobbett take of (1) Trees, (2) Soil, (3) Birds?
8. Draw a pen-and-ink sketch of Cobbett in a country town on market-day, and write underneath it a short dialogue between Cobbett and a farmer on the subject of the price of pigs.
9. Illustrate Cobbett's skill in depicting natural scenery.
10. Explain "Tooth-money," "Gallon-loaf man," "The Wen," "Six-Acts," "Dead-weight," "Pretty little Van," "The Thing," "Rags": and show how Cobbett derived the words "farmer" and "Beaulieu."
11. "Cobbett is of the brown earth earthy, and his joyous shouting pilgrimage along its high roads is refreshing to watch." Discuss.
12. Imagine Cobbett to be riding through rural England of to-day, and compose an account by him of any district through which he passes. Let him comment particularly on the motor-traffic on the roads, the popularity of the cinematograph in country towns, and of "listening-in" on the wireless in villages.



## BOOKS RECOMMENDED

*Rural Rides.* The complete Rides are published in two volumes in the Everyman Library, with notes by James Cobbett and an Introduction by Edward Thomas. (Dent.)

*William Cobbett : a Study of his Life as shown in his Writings,* by E. I. Carlyle. (Constable).

*The Character of Cobbett :* "Table Talk," Essay VI., by William Hazlitt.

*William Cobbett.* An essay in "Essays in English Literature 1780-1860," by George Saintsbury.

Pages on *Cobbett* (290-296) in "A Survey of English Literature 1780-1830," Vol. I, by Oliver Elton. (Arnold.)

*Life of Cobbett,* by G. D. H. Cole.

*William Cobbett : An Intimate Biography,* by G. K. Chesterton. (Hodder and Stoughton.)

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